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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for improving language and literacy development among young children. The targeted population consisted of public school children, ages three to five, enrolled in an early childhood special education program and an at-risk prekindergarten program. The problems of delayed language and literacy development skills were documented by parent and teacher surveys, parent reports that document literacy skills, and observations by trained professionals. Analysis of probable cause data revealed that many at-risk students display a deficit of language and literacy development related to vocabulary and phonemic awareness. The kindergarten staff has reported students are entering kindergarten unprepared in the area of reading readiness. Review of the research suggested that delays in the areas of language and literacy development if left unaddressed early in the child's life, would follow them throughout their school career and workplace. A review of solution strategies suggested by researchers in the field of education, combined with an analysis of the problem setting resulted in the development of a district wide program for improving language and literacy development. The program involved the implementation of a literature-based early childhood curriculum. Prior to the implementation of this curriculum, the children were given a phonemic awareness inventory. The curriculum was based on children's literature that was predictable, followed a familiar sequence, had repetitive patterns, and had concepts that were familiar to most early readers. Based on the chosen children's literature each child was given a pretest on the key vocabulary. After exposure the children were given a posttest to reassess their vocabulary. At the end of the school year, the children were reassessed to document any changes in their knowledge of phonemic awareness. Post intervention data indicated that the students made gains in the areas of vocabulary development and improved phonemic awareness. The children displayed increased motivation during classroom activities and a new appreciation for literature. The prekindergarten children demonstrated improved book handling skills, an awareness of rhyming words, increased participation in classroom libraries, utilization of classroom writing centers, and increased awareness of print. (Contains 43 references.) (Author/RS)

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IMPROVING STUDENT LANGUAGE AND LITERACY SKILLS THROUGH VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT AND PHONEMIC AWARENESS

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This report describes a program for improving language and literacy development among young children. The targeted population consisted of public school children, ages three to five, enrolled in an early childhood special education program and an at-risk prekindergarten program. The problems of delayed language and literacy development skills were documented by parent and teacher surveys, parent reports that document literacy skills, and observations by trained professionals.

Analysis of probable cause data revealed that many at-risk students display a deficit of language and literacy development related to vocabulary and phonemic awareness. The kindergarten staff has reported students are entering kindergarten unprepared in the area of reading readiness. Review of the research suggested that delays in the areas of language and literacy development if left unaddressed early in the child's life, would follow them throughout their school career and workplace.

A review of solution strategies suggested by researchers in the field of education, combined with an analysis of the problem setting resulted in the development of a district wide program for improving language and literacy development. The program involved the implementation of a literature-based early childhood curriculum. Prior to the implementation of this curriculum the children were given a phonemic awareness inventory. The curriculum was based on children's literature that was predictable, followed a familiar sequence, had repetitive patterns, and concepts that were familiar to most early readers. Based on the chosen children's literature each child was given a pretest on the key vocabulary. After exposure the children were given a posttest to reassess their vocabulary. At the end of the school year the children were reassessed to document any changes in their knowledge of phonemic awareness.

Post intervention data indicated that the students made gains in the areas of vocabulary development and improved phonemic awareness. The children displayed increased motivation during classroom activities and a new appreciation for literature. The prekindergarten children demonstrated improved book handling skills, an awareness of rhyming words, increased participation in classroom libraries, utilization of classroom writing centers, and increased awareness of print.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1- PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT 1

General Statement of the Problem 1

Immediate Problem Context 1

The Surrounding Community 5

National Context of the Problem 7

CHAPTER 2 – PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION 11

Probable Evidence 11

Probable Causes 16

CHAPTER 3 – THE SOLUTION STRATEGY 21

Literature Review 21

Project Objectives and Processes 32

Project Action Plan 33

Methods of Assessment 36

CHAPTER 4 – PROJECT RESULTS 38

Historical Description 38

Presentation and Analysis of Results 43

Conclusions and Recommendations 46

REFERENCES 51

APPENDIX

A AT-RISK CRITERIA 56

B PARENT INTERVIEW FORM/SOCIAL MEDICAL HISTORY 57

C PHONEMIC AWARENESS INVENTORY 58

D PRE AND POSTTEST VOCABULARY WORDS AND PICTURES 59

E PARENT VOCABULARY WORDS AND PICTURES 60

F I CAN READ BULLETIN BOARD ACTIVITY 61

G CALENDAR HOME ACTIVITIES 62

H FAMILY LITERACY – PARENT HAND-OUT 63

I BUILDING BLOCKS – PARENT HAND-OUT 64

J PHONEMIC AWARENESS INVENTORY RESULTS 65

K PRE AND POSTTEST RESULTS 66

L PARENT SURVEY 67

M BOOK REFERENCES 68

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

Problem Statement

The students that are identified for the state funded prekindergarten and early childhood special education programs exhibit delays in the areas of language and literacy development, which interfere with future academic success. Evidence for the existence of the problem includes parent reports, social and medical family history, observations of trained professionals and classroom observations. Evidence will support the individual student's special needs.

Immediate Problem Context

The site of this study is part of a large unit district, consisting of nine schools. The school serves as a site for state funded prekindergarten and early childhood programs for the entire district. According to the 1998 School Report Card, the site has a population of 575 students from prekindergarten to kindergarten. The site also contains two special education first grades and one developmental first grade program which provides services for children who are in need of extra support. A majority of the students are transported by bus, which is provided by the school district. Several families elect to transport their children to and from school due to individual needs. The site has two half-day sessions, each 2 hours and 30 minutes in length for prekindergarten and

kindergarten with the first grade students attending all day. Certain students in a special education program do attend both morning and afternoon sessions. This program was developed to better serve the kindergarten students in special education by providing an all day program.

Based on the school report card for 1998, the site has a low-income population of 16.1%. The ethnic background of the site is as follows: 72.7% White, 25.4% Hispanic, 1.6% Asian/Pacific Islander and 0.3% Black. As identified above, the Hispanic population at the site is 12% higher than the state average. The site is located in a large Metropolitan area in the Midwest that is surrounded by several rural communities. The student attendance rate was reported to be 95.9%. Student mobility is 12.7%, which is lower than the state average.

In 1997, the community supported a tax referendum, which allowed the district to complete two building additions to existing facilities and build a new elementary school. A second result of the referendum identified a need to redefine school boundaries. The redistricting caused the site to be relocated to a previous elementary school. The relocation in 1998 provided an opportunity to add several additional programs and staff members. The additional programs consisted of two special education first grades and one developmental first grade classroom. The site is a single story building consisting of four wings: prekindergarten at-risk, early childhood special education, kindergarten and first grade special education programs and the county special education program for children ages three to six.

The site has 75 employees. The breakdown is 12 general education teachers, 10 special education teachers, 20 teaching assistants and related support staff. The

bilingual staff totals four people. The composition of the staff includes a music teacher, a physical education teacher and a librarian. There is an adaptive physical education teacher, three occupational therapists, and two physical therapists. The support staff consists of two social workers, a social work intern, five speech pathologists, three school psychologists, a clerical lunch supervisor, a nursing assistant and a part-time nurse. Vision and hearing itinerants provide services in the classrooms for individual students based on referrals. The administrative staff includes a building principal, a full-time secretary, a part-time secretary, a parent-home liaison for bilingual students and a parent coordinator servicing families that have young children. The custodial staff employs one full-time and two part-time custodians. The average teacher at the site has 13.8 years of teaching experience, with 32 of the teachers, or 44.8% having earned a Master's Degree.

The site provides the district's youngest students, ages three to eight, with a unique educational environment that comes from devoting an entire staff and facility to the education, encouragement and well-being of the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students. The site's programs consider the whole child, with an emphasis on social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth. The curriculum introduces children to various areas of development, including readiness skills in reading and writing.

The site offers preschool screening once a month to identify children, in the community, ages three, four and five who may encounter some learning problems, or would benefit from specialized help prior to entering kindergarten. The screening instrument used is called Developmental Indicators to Assess Learning (Dial-3). The Dial-3 gives information about developmental skills such as how the child uses his or her body (motor skills), knowledge of basic concepts such as counting and colors (conceptual

skills) and the child's use and understanding of language. The site provides speech and language services for preschoolers that do not qualify for the state funded at-risk prekindergarten program or early childhood special education, but are in need of language services. All services are provided in the least restrictive environment to meet each child's individual needs.

The at-risk program is state funded. It was developed for children who have developmental delays in the areas of cognition, speech and language, fine and gross motor, social and emotional and self-help. Family demographics, medical needs and other individual factors that may impact the child's development and academic success may make them eligible for the program. The children qualify for the at-risk program on a point system. The children must have a total of eight points from four different categories (Appendix A). This program was developed to meet the needs of students who may be at-risk of academic failure without early intervention. The at-risk program meets for 2 hours and 30 minutes a day four days per week. The fifth day is reserved for home visits and parent workshops. Each class may have 20 children between the ages of four and five. Each classroom consists of a teacher and a classroom assistant. Within the classroom setting, a speech therapist and a translator for spanish speaking students service the children. In 1998, there were five classes of the state funded at-risk program.

In addition, the site contains an early childhood special education program for children who have significant delays in two or more areas of development. The children are grouped by age or individual ability levels. This program meets for 2 hours and 30 minutes a day four days per week as well. The fifth day is reserved for home visits and parent workshops. The early childhood program is child centered and the curriculum

focuses on a multisensory play based approach. Each class is limited to 12 students with one teacher and one classroom assistant. In 1998, there were six sessions of early childhood special education.

The Surrounding Community

The school is part of a community unit school district in the northwest suburbs of a large area in the Midwest. The district serves a 10.7 square mile area and has a population of 18,207. According to the school report card, 16.1% are from low-income families and 7.1% are classified as limited English speakers. The per pupil expenditure is $5,419.

The site is located in a large unit district with a current enrollment of 5,157 students. The administrative structure of the district consists of a superintendent, eight principals and two assistant principals. Other administrators within the district include the director of curriculum and instruction, the director of special services, a special education technical assistant and the associate superintendent of finance and business services.

The school district is comprised of nine educational centers. There are five elementary schools serving grades one through five, two middle schools serving grades six through eight, one high school and one early learning center.

Community Demographics

The school district is located in the northwest suburbs of a large metropolitan area in the Midwest. Within the community's county, there are a variety of job opportunities requiring a wide range of educational backgrounds, resulting in an influx of low-income families with fewer educational advantages. The family mobility rate is

affected by the large number of blue-collar jobs. Over the past five years the community has gone through many demographic changes which have impacted the school district. This district is located in one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. The growth in population has caused many of the schools to become overcrowded. There are four low-income housing facilities located in the community. The per capita income in the county is $22,753 and the median household income is $51,207. The ethnic background of the population consists of diverse cultures groups. The majority of the population is Caucasian consisting of 175,273 people, with a Hispanic population of 6,066, an Asian/Pacific Islander population of 1,293, a Black population of 310 and a Native-American population of 299.

Community Support for the Schools

The district provides many opportunities for parent involvement. At the early learning level active parenting classes are offered monthly. The early childhood and at-risk teachers are required to visit each child's home twice a year. This component is built into both programs and allows the teachers to have one on one contact with each child and family in their home environment. Parent workshops are held at the site and in the community. Parent and child activities are held monthly with parent-teacher conferences occurring twice a year, providing many opportunities for interaction. The bilingual parent liaison offers ESL classes and teaches many skills that are needed to assist parents in adapting to the community. According to the 1998 school report card, parents and or guardians at this site made at least one contact with the students' teachers during the 1997-1998 school year.

National Context of the Problem

Recent research by the National Research Council, tells us that four in ten children experience literacy problems (Snow, Burns, & Griffin,1999). A large number of people in America cannot read as well as they should to be successful in life (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1999). Large numbers of school-age children, including children from all social classes, face significant difficulties in learning to read. An increasing proportion of children in American schools, are considered learning disabled; most of the children are so identified because of reading difficulties. According to the to U.S. Department of Education, more than one child in six has problems learning to read during the first three years in school (NAEP, 1996). The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (1996) reports that this proportion is found in schools characterized by children who do not learn to read and comprises over 50% of the special education population. Unfortunately 35% of the special education population drop out of school (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development). As stated by Goldman (1995), "No children, rich or poor, are exempt from risk; these problems are universal; occurring in all ethnic, racial, and income groups" (p. 233). The National Assessment of Educational Process reports these reading findings:

> Forty-four percent of our nation's fourth-grade children read below the basic level of proficiency in 1994. In California, which was last in the nation next to Louisiana and Guam, 59% of fourth-graders read below the basic level and scores had declined from 1992. Our country's reading levels are average among our industrialized competitors, and our position is continuing to slip. (Hall & Moats, 1999, p. 3-4)

Snow, Burns, & Griffin, from the National Research Council (1998) discuss their findings and state, "Language development during the preschool years, in particular the development of rich vocabulary and some familiarity with phonemic awareness, constitutes another important area of preparation for formal reading instruction" (p. 170). Primary prevention of reading difficulties during the preschool years involves ensuring that families of young children offer the experiences and support that make these language and literacy accomplishments possible. As stated by Hall and Moats (1999) the America's reading challenge is no secret. Reading achievement scores in the United States have declined in many states too many children do not read well enough to succeed later at basic jobs. President Clinton has promoted his American Reads Challenge during his second term in office. This challenge encourages all children to read at grade level by third grade with the help of tutors. The America Reads Challenge recommends that parents and other caregivers should spend time in one-on-one conversation with young children, read books to them thirty minutes a day, provide writing and reading materials, support dramatic play that incorporates literacy activities, demonstrate the uses of literacy, maintain a joyful and playful atmosphere around literacy activities, and become involved in public library programs (Hall & Moats). Schickedanz states (as cited in Chomsky1972; Moerk1985; Wells 1985), "It has been long been known that children with a history of listening to stories during the early years have better developed language skills and better reading comprehension than do children without such a history" (1999, p. 54). According to the National Research Council, "Children who are exposed to sophisticated vocabulary in the course of interesting conversation learn the words they will later need to recognize and understand when reading" (Snow et

al., 1999, p. 19). Current research studies support the importance of literacy development and recommends that children at-risk for reading difficulties should have access to early childhood environments, which promote language and literacy development. These environments should address a variety of skills that have been identified as predictors of later reading achievements (Snow et al., 1998). Learning to read is a lengthy and difficult process for many young children. Achievement in learning to read is based on enhancing language and literacy skills very early in life through a multisensory approach. Schickedanz states "Reading and writing, like other aspects of development have long histories that reach back into infancy" (p. 1).

Another factor related to declining reading scores and the increase in the number of children having reading difficulties is how reading is being taught in our schools (Hall & Moats, 1999). The Whole Language philosophy which swept the country 15 years ago and took root about 10 years ago has had a significant impact on children's literacy. This philosophy is taught through immersion in children's literature, without direct, systematic, cumulative teaching of phonics, spelling, grammar or comprehension. The term Whole Language means to teach reading without breaking language down into its parts. Whole Language methods presume that children will learn to read naturally, through exposure to literature, with minimal instruction in the component skills of reading, such as knowing the sounds in words and how to spell them (Hall & Moats). When using the Whole Language philosophy, children are instructed to look at pictures in the books and guess at the unknown words. They are not encouraged to sound out the words that they don't recognize. Children in turn do not develop sound

awareness as well as others who are encouraged to sound out words that are unrecognizable.

Phonics is a necessary part of any reading program, along with sight word learning, and vocabulary study. All of this should take place in a class that surrounds children with good literature and leads them to write about it. Classrooms of children who are taught to sound out words after they learn letters and speech sounds, do better on word reading, spelling and passage comprehension than children who are not so taught (Hall & Moats, 1999).

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

In order to document the need for language and literacy development, the teacher researchers reviewed the parent interview forms and anecdotal recordings of student observations in the classroom reading centers. Data collection methods focused on typical literacy experiences appropriate for three, four and five year olds who have been identified as having at-risk characteristics for reading success or failure. The teacher researchers administered a Phonemic Awareness Inventory (PAI) to assess the children's current level of phonemes used in our written and verbal language. Children who were identified for speech and language services were also given the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-III) to assess the child's receptive language and vocabulary. Children who were placed in the early childhood special education classes may not have been given the PPVT-III due to individual differences of each child. Their need for intervention is documented in their Individual Education Program (IEP) in the areas of speech and language.

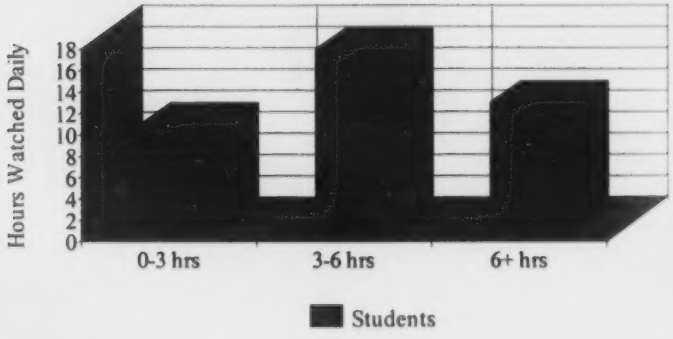
An analysis of the parent interview form and social and medical history (Appendix B) collected for each student revealed that 71.8% have delays in the areas of speech and language development. The following results are based upon parent reports in

the areas of the amount of television watched per week and favorite family activities. The parent interview form also revealed information pertaining to the level of parent education (Appendix B). The majority of the parents in these programs do not have a formal education beyond high school. Teacher researchers have also observed that many parents have poor written communication skills as seen in handwritten notes from parents and difficulty completing school paperwork. This information was collected to determine the amount of time that was spent reading together in preparation for reading success. According to the National Research Council, "The best time to start sharing books with children is during babyhood, even when they are as young as six weeks" (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1999, p.15).

Amount of Television Watched Daily

The following chart shows the number of hours spent each day watching television. The information was collected from the parent interview form (Appendix B). Each bar represents the number of students in each category.

Figure 1



The selected children used for this study spend between 2 and 10 hours a day watching television. All families reported that television is watched daily in their home.

Several families stated that television is one of their favorite activities. Researchers have stressed the importance of restricting the amount and quality of television children watch. Children in the targeted classrooms have discussed their viewing of adult content television programs during classroom activities as exhibited in the classroom through the uses of inappropriate language and violent behaviors.

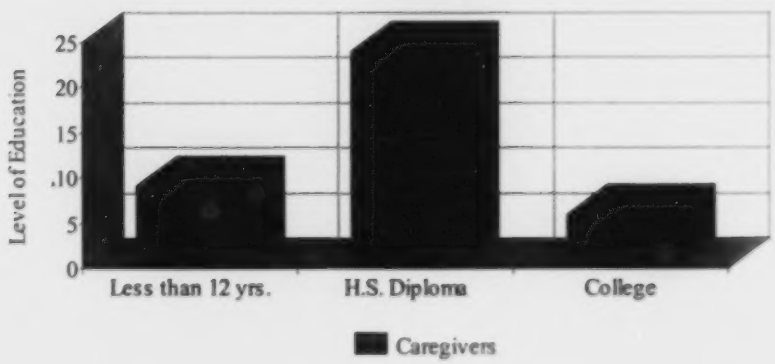
Favorite Family Activities

Outdoor activities ranked high with the families as favorite activities. Of the targeted families, 34% play outside, take walks, garden, and/or ride bikes. Twenty percent of the family respondents reported that reading and looking at books is a favorite family activity. Seventeen percent of the families, reported that shopping is a weekly family activity. Other family activities included watching television, eating at restaurants, cleaning the house and coloring activities.

Parents' Level of Education

The following graph shows the highest level of education completed by the primary caretaker. Each bar represents the number of caretakers in each category.

Figure 2



When recording the level of parent education, 23.1% have not received a high school diploma, 61.5% have graduated from high school and only 15.4% of the parents have attended school beyond high school, including universities and trade schools.

Analysis of Phonemic Awareness Inventory (PAI)

The Phonemic Awareness Inventory (Appendix C) is a comprehensive tool that assesses children's phonological performance. The test should be administered orally and individually to each child. The inventory assesses the child's knowledge of whole word discrimination, recognizing rhyming words, rhyming word application and syllable counting (long and short words). The PAI consists of five different phonemic awareness levels with 30 test items. The initial average on the PAI was 10.5. The teacher researchers administered the Level 1 Rhythm and Rhyme due to the children's age and abilities.

Research supports that phonemic awareness in preschoolers predicts later reading achievement as well as or better than any variable yet found. Equally as supportive, numerous studies have shown that teaching phonemic awareness to those who have language difficulties increases their reading achievement (Gough, Larson, & Yopp, 1999). Gilbertson & Thompson (as cited in Torgesen, Wagner, & Rashotte, 1994) state that, "In preparation for reading, children need to have some degree of phonemic awareness skill to help them to make connections between spoken and written symbol" (1997, p. 14). The research by Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) supports that normally developing children in the late preschool years can discriminate among and within the phonemes/units of language. Other recent research states that children who are better at

detecting syllables, rhymes and phonemes tend to learn to read quicker (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998).

Analysis of PPVT- III

The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-III) is a test that assesses children's receptive vocabulary. The PPVT-III is easy to administer and is highly reliable even at the youngest ages. It is extremely useful in testing preschool children where vocabulary acquisition is important in identifying a child's linguistic and cognitive development. The PPVT-III is designed for persons aged two and a half through ninety plus years. The PPVT-III was standardized nationally on a stratified sample of 2,725 participants. The composition of the group included 2,000 children; adolescents and 725 persons over age 19.

Children's scores that fall in the range of 85-115 on the PPVT-III are considered to be within the average range regarding their receptive language skills. If the score falls below 85 they are considered mild, moderate or severely delayed, depending on the total standard score. Based on initial test scores the average PPVT-III score was 84.8. Although this score falls close to the average range, many children had significant delays in receptive language skills, particularly vocabulary development.

Summary

In conclusion, it was noted that the targeted children have limited literacy opportunities. Television plays a major role in all targeted areas. Television was listed as a favorite family activity and typical daily activity in the home. It was noted that television was more of a daily family routine than reading and looking at books. It was observed in the classrooms that children had little exposure to books. This was noted by

observing poor book handling, lack of care and respect for books and the knowledge that pictures and books have meaning.

Probable Causes

An analysis of the probable cause indicates that students lack language and literacy skills due to limited language abilities, lack of parent training and decreased exposure to books in print. Evidence of these probable causes was found at the targeted site and in the review of literature. The students at this site are between the ages of three and five years old. The children have been placed in the at-risk and early childhood special education classrooms through a district wide screening that determines the appropriate placement for the children. Some children may require additional testing to determine the most appropriate and least restrictive environment.

At this site the parents are provided with many workshops to help improve their child's behavior, reduce holiday stress, sibling rivalry and etc. While the workshops are helpful to parents, they do not stress the importance of early literacy. It has been observed that some children know the appropriate way to hold a book, can write their name and demonstrate an awareness of rhyming words. Other children are unable to distinguish between letters and numbers, unable to attend to a short story and do not have an awareness of proper book handling. As defined by Schickedanz (1999) book handling comprises behaviors relating to children's physical manipulation of books. When parents read to their child the child learns how to hold a book, turn pages and how to enjoy the literature. Simply the exposure to books can make a reader out of a child. The children in the study exhibited behaviors typical of children ages 12 months to their current age level. Some behaviors that were observed included flipping through a book

by gathering a clump of pages in hand, tearing pages, holding the book upside down and bending the cover. The teacher researchers have found that the children they teach have diverse backgrounds, abilities and experiences as found in the parent interview form completed at the screening.

Many children need high-quality preschool and school environments with excellent primary instruction to be sure of reading success, because of this variation in the home environment (Snow et al., 1998). Opportunities provided in the home for literacy acquisition during the preschool years may contribute primarily to the child's acquirement of attitudes toward literacy and of skills (such as vocabulary growth and letter knowledge) that may promote learning when school instruction begins (Snow et al.). Some of the children entering the programs at the targeted site have had previous preschool experiences while others have not. Children who are most at-risk for reading failure are those who begin school with insufficient exposure to language. The children will demonstrate less prior knowledge of concepts related to phonemic sensitivity, letter knowledge, print awareness, the purposes of reading and general verbal skills including vocabulary (Lyon, 1997).

Over a third of children in the U.S. enter school unprepared to learn. Once they enter school, many children lack the vocabulary, sentence structure and other basic skills that are required to do well in school (Whitehurst, 1992). According to Adams (1990):

> We must become universally committed to developing their appreciation of and familiarity with text. We hug them, we give them treats and good things to eat; we try to teach them to be clean and polite, good natured, thoughtful and fair. We do these things because it is the best way we know to set them off on happy,

healthy lives. We must do as much with reading. In our society, their lives depend on it. (p. 91)

The curriculum at the site focused on all areas of children's development. Each teacher developed weekly lesson plans based on chosen thematic units. Children's books were read daily in the classrooms as part of the thematic units. Previously books were not used as the main source of instruction. The teachers in the at-risk and early childhood classrooms do not have any formal literacy curriculum guides, requiring many teachers to develop their own curriculum and individual use of children's literature in the classroom. The teacher researchers have implemented many of the developmentally appropriate practices from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). These practices consist of principles and recommendations for teaching language and literacy development. Formal curriculum guides provide teachers with basic goals and knowledge for implementing appropriate content used to teach literacy. The district has developed literacy goals for all other grade levels except for those in the early childhood classrooms.

Children immersed regularly in literacy-rich environments learn about written language by handling books, hearing stories read aloud by adults, drawing pictures and attempting to write about real-life experiences. If children do not see their parents reading books they are not encouraged to pick up books and read them independently. Reading aloud becomes a part of your family heritage, if you read to your children, they will read to theirs (Cullinan, 1992). Children who see their parents read for pleasure learn the value of recreational reading (Fox, 1989). Preparing your preschool age child for reading doesn't take direct instruction. Parents can provide their children with a

variety of books, text and print in a natural environment. While reading books, they should ask them questions, point at pictures and have fun. When reading to preschoolers adults shoud invite them to join in on the repetitive phrases (Cullinan). "You have all the preschool years to send an important message to your child: Reading is fun" (Cullinan, p. 56). Fox states "There is no substitute for leisure reading. No other activity, inside or outside the classroom, contributes as much to improving fluency, word knowledge, comprehension, and speed" (p. 36-37). When you read to your child, you are handing down the magic of reading (Cullinan).

As reported in the parent interview form (Appendix B), it was noted television takes precedence over book reading in many households. Television plays a major role in the lack of literacy development in our nation's youth. According to the Family Partnership for Learning Organization (1999), "Academic achievement drops sharply for children who watch more that 10 hours of television per week, or an average of more than two hours per day" (p. 1). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 1999) surveyed fourth, eighth, and twelfth grade students regarding the amount of time they spent watching television. At all three grade levels, students who reported viewing three or fewer hours of television each day had higher average reading scores than students who reported watching four or more hours a day. The children who reported watching six or more hours a day exhibited the lowest reading scores (NAEP).

Current literature suggests that there are many predictors to ensure success in reading readiness and pre-literacy experiences. Seung-Yoeun Yoo (1997) reflects this in the following statement:

> Children's literature can help fulfill the purpose of an early childhood education, which is to develop in young children social, emotional, cognitive, linguistic and physical skills. In other words, a child is encouraged to develop as a whole child through a variety of activities while developing their personality and their learning during their early childhood education. For this purpose, children's literature is the best way to provide such a range of experiences that enables children to develop and discover language and how to live their own stories, based on their own voice and ideas. (p. 1)

Teachers, both local and across, the country report that the children they instruct are now more diverse. They are diverse in their backgrounds, experiences and abilities. Kindergarten classes now include children who have been in group settings for three to four years, with children who are in organized programs for the first time (NAEYC, IRA, 1998). Reading delays are found among every group and in every primary classroom, although some children within certain demographic characteristics are at greater risk of reading difficulties than others (Snow et al., 1999). Failing to give children literacy experiences until they are school-age can severely limit the their success in school (NAEYC, IRA).

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

Based on the research that has been done on emergent literacy, there is a need to educate children at an early age. Many researchers have found that the children who are most at risk for reading failure enter kindergarten and the elementary years without early literacy experiences (Lyon, 1998). According to Whitehurst (1992), Professor of Psychology, over a third of children in the United States, enter school unprepared to learn. They lack the vocabulary, sentence structure and other basic skills that are required to do well in school. Children, who start behind generally stay behind, they drop out, they turn off. Their lives are at risk. Lyon states "Children who have stimulating literacy experiences from birth onward have an edge in vocabulary development, understanding the goals of reading, and developing an awareness of print and literacy concepts" (p. 4). The early childhood years are the most sensitive years for children to feel and taste children's literature. Literacy development begins at an early age and is a continuous process that is linked to oral language and social interactions (Notari-Syverson, O'Connor, & Vadasy, 1998).

Millions of America's children, in our schools, are not learning to read well (Hall & Moats, 1999). National surveys tell us that four in ten children experience literacy

problems (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1999). Schickedanz (1999) states (as cited by the Snow et al., 1999) that children often enter first grade without the foundation needed to benefit from the instruction their teachers provide to enable children to become beginning readers. Research by Hall & Moats (1999) shows that if we wait beyond first grade to give a child help, that child is likely to remain behind. "Children who acquire a lot of literacy knowledge and skill before entering first grade are most likely to be those who have had a rich history of skillfully medicated literacy experiences" (Schickedanz, p. 7). If a child is behind in third grade, the odds are strong that the child will remain behind for the rest of his schooling. Researchers in the field of education have found that reading is the most important skill for success in school and society. "Children who fail to read will surely fail to reach their full potential" (Hall & Moats, p. 6-7). According to the International Dyslexia Association, people in the United States who are illiterate represent 75% of the unemployed and 60% of those who are prison inmates.

Possible solutions are investigated for why children have difficulties with language and literacy development, phonemic awareness and parental education and training and will be discussed in the following sections.

Language and Literacy Development. Jackman (1997) in the *Early Education Curriculum*, defines literacy development as a life-long process that begins at birth. It includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing and extends into the early childhood years. According to *Raising a Reader*, a brochure distributed by The National Association for the Education of Young Children, "Reading to children broadens their world, introduces then to the joys of reading, and expands their knowledge and vocabulary" (p. 3). Marge Nelson, a nationally acclaimed educator, has designed a

simple hands-on guide for parents and teachers, titled *Peak With Books*. Nelson and a colleague outlined three dozen of the best children's books and provided follow-up activities to be used in the classroom in order to clarify the child's understanding of the story (Nelson & Nelson, 1991). *Peak With Books*, was developed based on the 1985, National Institute of Education publication, *Becoming a Nation of Readers* report. "The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children" (National Institute of Education, 1985, p. 23). The use of books with predictable patterns allows the children to participate in reading aloud (Gilbertson & Thompson, 1997). Emergent Literacy Instructional Program and Support Services (ELIPSS), describes predictable texts as books that contain repetitive phases or verses, cumulative patterns, a familiar story line, or language with rhythm and rhyme (1996). Research by Schickedanz (1999) supports that predictable books, by nature use controlled language and expose children to fewer new words than do books without controlled language. By reading predictable books, children learn the text quickly. Books with predictable patterns rhyme, so children can easily guess words and phrases that they cannot yet read (Gilbertson & Thompson). Often, the children can anticipate what will happen next. This anticipation increases their attention and awareness of print (Schickedanz). An example of predictable patterns can be seen in the book titled *Jump Frog Jump* by Robert Kalan. At the end of each page a question is asked, i.e. "How did the frog catch the fly?" An example of a repetitive phase in *Jump Frog Jump* is that the reader replies, "jump frog jump" to answer each previous question. "By enabling children to learn some or all of a book by heart, simple and highly predictable texts allow them to take on the role of the reader" (Schickedanz, p. 46).

The Phonological Awareness Group Education (PAGE) is an intervention program developed by Gilbertson that targets phonemic awareness skills and vocabulary development. In a small group setting oral and written language learning is promoted through themes generated by predictable books (Gilbertson & Thompson, 1997). Reading books to children has an influence on their oral language, thus increasing their vocabulary (Strickland & Morrow, 1989). Vocabulary development starts when children learn labels for objects in their environment, through play and in story books (Notari-Syverson et al., 1998). Children with oral and written language impairments often require intervention for the development of vocabulary skills (Gilbertson & Thompson). In the study by Dickinson and Smith (1994) the oral language skills of special interest are vocabulary and story comprehension. These two areas of language development are significant factors to the child's success in learning to read. In this study, long term effects of preschool teachers book reading to low income children show an increase in vocabulary development. Language and literacy development during the preschool years, in particular the expansion of a rich vocabulary and of some familiarity with language forms used for communication and books, constitutes another equally important domain of preparation for formal reading instruction (Snow et al., 1998). A child with a large listening and speaking vocabulary has an enormous advantage in learning to read. More than any other skill, reading comprehension depends on knowing the meanings of the individual words in the passage. Dickenson & Smith state that there is a large quantity of evidence to suggest that book reading experiences encourage the vocabulary development of preschool age children.

In early childhood classrooms, play is the equivalent of an adult's work world. Language and literacy are taught by acting out real-life situations, experiences, reading books, writing letters, drawing and visiting places in their imaginations (Adams, 1990). Young children have a lot of imagination and creativity to interpret stories and relate them to their lives (Yoo, 1997). As quoted by Schickedanz (1999), "Books allow children to visit places for the very first time or to revisit places they already know about" (p. 41). Books allow children to discover and use their imagination. Books are also critical tools for learning new and exciting information. "In our society, reading is essential for creating a healthy mind and for building the capacity needed for a lifetime of learning" (Snow et al., 1999, p. vii). Notari-Syverson et al. (1998) state that, "During the preschool years, children become aware of print and books by developing their concepts of literacy" (p. 14). Simple changes in early childhood classrooms can have an impact on a child's literacy development. Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) support other researchers stating that before children learn to read conventionally, they are able to recognize labels, signs, and other familiar print in their environment. The use of signs, pictures, symbols and words to label the room provides children with an enriched literacy environment, as well as displaying classroom rules, schedules and written directions. Developmentally appropriate classrooms should give children the opportunity to select activities and have multisensory experiences in a variety of centers (Jackman, 1997). A child-centered early childhood program focuses on children learning and playing. Children learn through play. These opportunities are provided through a variety of centers such as: listening and library, writing, dramatic play, discovery, block building, motor and manipulatives. Books and writing materials are included in all of these centers.

Current research states that reading is a language-based activity. Reading does not develop naturally. Young children learn best from having books read to them (Lyon, 1998). As quoted by Becoming a Nation of Readers (1984), "Early development of the knowledge required for reading comes from experience talking and learning about the world and talking and learning about written language" (p. 21). The more that children are read to and exposed to literature, the better opportunity they have to become literate (Yoo, 1997). "Children who learn to read early are ones who have been read to" (Strickland & Morrow, 1999, p. 35). There are many benefits from reading aloud. When children are read to they develop background knowledge about a variety of topics, build a vocabulary, become familiar with rich language patterns, develop familiarity with story structure, acquires familiarity with the reading process and identifies reading as a pleasurable activity. Researchers in the field of education, Notari-Syverson et al., (1998) indicate that "Children learn about literacy when they listen to stories, help adults follow cooking recipes, memorize logos, draw pictures, scribble unintelligibly or invent spelling" (p. 2). Schickedanz states (1999):

> When we consider all that a good book has to offer preschool and kindergarten children, it is not surprising that the children who make good progress in learning to read during the first grade are usually those who enter with considerable book experience under their belt. (p. 42)

Whitehurst and colleagues developed an emergent literacy intervention called dialogic reading. These researchers have found that dialogic reading can produce changes in young children's language and literacy skills (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). When most adults share a book with a preschooler, they read and the child listens.

Dialogic reading consists of several changes in the ways adults and children interact during book reading. The child becomes the storyteller and the adult assumes the role of an active listener and they also become the questioner and the audience for the child. Whitehurst (1992) comments that we do not learn to play the piano just by listening to someone else play. Likewise, no one can learn to read just by listening to someone else read. Children learn most from books when they are actively involved and engaged. Whitehurst and colleagues found that dialogic reading could substantially increase children's language development. Dialogic reading was implemented in several geographic areas including New York, Tennessee, and Mexico, in settings as varied as homes, preschools, and daycare centers. This process was used with children from economic backgrounds ranging from poverty to affluence (Whitehurst, 1992). According to Whitehurst, "Dialogic reading works. Children who have been read to dialogically are substantially ahead of children who have been read to traditionally on tests of language development" (p. 3). Whitehurst states "Children who are read to three times per week or more do much better in later development than children who are read to less than three times per week" (p. 1).

Phonemic Awareness. Research supports that phonemic awareness in preschoolers predicts later reading achievement as well as or better than any variable yet found. Educators are always looking for valid and reliable predictors of educational achievement. One reason why educators are so interested in phonemic awareness is that research indicates that it is the best predictor of early reading acquisition, better than IQ, vocabulary, and listening comprehension (Adams, 1990). Equally as supportive, many studies have shown that teaching phonemic awareness to those who have language

difficulties increases their reading achievement (Gough, Larson, & Yopp, 1999). To read an alphabetic language like English, children must know that written spellings systematically represent spoken sounds. Phonemic awareness is the sounds we hear in spoken language (Lyon, 1998). Schickedanz (1999) defines phonemic awareness, as "sensitivity to small units of sound in the language is essential for learning to read and write an alphabetic script" (p. 60). "Children begin to demonstrate awareness of the sounds of language by repeating words, phrases and phonemes and discriminating between different phonemes" (Notari-Syverson et al., 1998, p. 16). Children in the early stages of learning have difficulties sequencing sounds. Their understanding of the alphabetic principle is limited. They initially hear words as one big sound rather than many distinct sounds. It takes training and modeling before students are capable of thinking of sounds separately within a word. Studies show that an absence of phonemic awareness is characteristic of students who are failing, or have failed to read. "The implication is clear—phonemic awareness can significantly bridge the critical gap between inadequate preparation for literacy and success in beginning reading" (Fitzpatrick, 1997, p. 6). Whitehust (1998) states that "children who are better at detecting syllables, rhymes, or phonemes are quicker to learn to read" (p. 2).

Another equally important component of phonemic awareness is alliteration. Alliteration is defined as the recognizing or producing words with common initial sounds (Notari-Syverson et al., 1998). Notari-Syverson et al., (as cited in Maclean et al., 1997) "Children as young as three are able to recognize words that start with a same sound, and measures of alliteration are closely related to early reading" (p. 135). Many children's

books focus on rhyming and alliteration. Children's literature draws the children's attention to the different sounds of speech (Snow et al., 1998).

Lundgren, Frost, and Peterson (1988) developed a program to implement phonemic awareness in the preschool curriculum. This program was originally developed in Denmark and Sweden, and translated and adapted to be used in U.S. classrooms. Their findings support that kindergarten children who received training in phonemic awareness developed the ability to analyze words into sounds more quickly than children who did not have this program (Adams, Foorman, Lundberg, & Beeler, 1999). The *Classroom Curriculum: Phonemic Awareness in Young Children*, presents a program full of games and activities to enhance phonemic awareness development. There are many types of activities that can help build phonemic awareness in young children. Rhyming, syllable clapping, and alliteration draw children to the attention of the sounds of speech. Other activities that promote phonemic awareness include: isolating the first segment of a word, finding all the objects that begin with the same sound, discovering what is left when a particular segment is removed from a word, braking one-syllable words into their phonemes and blending phonemes to make a word (Snow et al., 1999).

Many children experience their first exposure to rhyme and alliteration during the early infancy when their caregivers recite nursery rhymes, sing silly songs and do interactive finger plays (i.e. "Itsy Bitsy Spider", "Pat-A-Cake", "Wheels on the Bus"). Researchers Maclean, Bradley, & Bryant (1987) found that the early knowledge of nursery rhymes was strongly related to the development of more abstract and phonemic awareness skills and of emergent reading abilities (Adams, 1990). Infants are very sensitive to speech that has an elevated pitch, wide variation in pitch, long pauses, and

exaggerated stress on syllables. Researchers have not pinpointed the exact reasons why babies respond to this speech style, or how such speech heightens their ability to learn language (Schickedanz, 1999). The rhyme and alliteration used in children's storybooks makes the listener aware of individual sounds of language in ways that ordinary conversation can not (Schickedanz). When children begin to recognize rhyme, this becomes the beginning of the understanding of phonemic awareness (Hempenstall, 1998). "Sensitivity to rhyme and alliteration might pave the way for the higher level of phonemic awareness required to segment words into their constituent phonemes" (Schickedanz, p. 63). Studies by Bryant, Bradley, MacLean, and Crossland (1990) showed a very strong relationship between rhyming ability at age three years and performance at reading and spelling three years later. A number of these studies have reinforced the value of such early exposure to rhyming games. Rhyming and phonemic awareness are related through their common characteristic of requiring listening for sound similarities and differences (Hempenstall).

Parental Education and Training. For young children, the parent component is critical to their development, especially in the areas of language and literacy. For typically developing preschool age children and children with disabilities teaching parents to read with their children enhances their language development (Notari-Syverson, et al., 1998). According to the research by Schickedanz (1999), "Parents with more education and greater financial resources often are able to provide more opportunities than are parents with fewer resources" (p. 7). Opportunities for learning about reading and writing are simply more prevalent when children live in environments that support reading and writing. Early contacts with print, even a few months old, is the

start of a life long process of learning to read and write (Strickland & Morrow, 1989). When parents read to their children, they are laying down the foundation for a love of reading and nurture their child's development (Raising a Reader, 1998). Strickland and Morrow state "For many years, educators have known that children who come from homes in which story book reading takes place have an educational advantage over those who do not" (p. 27). Parents can provide these experiences in environments that support literacy. These supportive homes include bookshelves filled with personal books and books checked out from the local library, magazines and newspapers. At their reach, the children have paper; a variety of writing utensils, and writing samples available to them and seen in their everyday life. Young children are typically fascinated with writing and writing tools. They watch adults write and then scribble their imitations on paper. Learning opportunities are seen all over a literate home. They are on cereal boxes, grocery and birthday lists, mail from their grandparents and written telephone messages. "In North America, a great many children can recognize the words *McDonald's*, with the golden arches, as early as twenty-four months" (Kropp, 1996, p. 60). According to the National Reading Council researchers, have studied literacy-specific interventions with parents whose children attended a public Head Start program. Books were provided free to these families, and parents were taught strategies on how to interact with their child. In these studies, the curriculum included child development, guidance to foster child development and school readiness. Programs such as Parents as Teachers, Home Instruction Program for Parents for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), and Dialogic Reading show positive outcomes in language and literacy development (Snow et al., 1998). Dialogic reading consists of several changes in the ways adults and children

interact during book reading. The child becomes the storyteller and the adult assumes the role of an active listener and they also become the questioner and the audience for the child.

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of the use of emergent literacy teaching strategies within the classroom setting, during the period from February 1999 to May 1999, the early childhood special education and at-risk preschool classrooms at the targeted site will increase their vocabulary and knowledge of phonemic awareness. The improvement of vocabulary development and phonemic awareness skills are evidenced by, pre and posttests, improved book handling and increased awareness of print as seen in the development of classroom books based on themes.

In order to accomplish the project outcomes the following processes are necessary:

1. Develop a 15-week action research plan.
2. Select 14 predictable pattern books.
3. Create seven thematic units to collaborate with the selected literature.
4. Select 90 targeted vocabulary words (10 – 15 per unit).
5. Researchers will develop lesson plans focused on selected children's literature to increase students' vocabulary and appreciation for literature.
6. Researchers will encourage the students to regularly visit the classroom library and writing centers within the classroom.
7. Researchers will help the students to develop an awareness of print and letter knowledge as introduced in books.

8. Researchers will give the students an awareness of word sounds, rhyming, and alliteration.
9. Researchers will encourage the parents to practice the selected vocabulary words at home.
10. Researchers will encourage the parents to attend parent education workshops focusing on: family literacy, reading readiness, and kindergarten readiness.
11. Researchers will integrate literature activities into the students' gym and music curriculum.

Project Action Plan

In order to implement our action plan we will improve the literacy environment within our classrooms by providing the following:

- Display familiar predictable children's books in the classroom library
- Develop writing centers with a variety of materials (newspapers, magazines, notepads, journals, markers, stamps, paper, pencils, pens)
- Visible pocket attendance charts with each child's name
- Develop interactive bulletin boards based on the literature based themes
- Make classroom books based on the themes
- "I Can Read" bulletin boards (Appendix F)
- Send home Take Home Characters – Journalizing activity with families
- Books on tape read by the classroom teacher to be sent home with the students
- Pre and posttests per unit (Appendix D)
- Monthly calendars and daily activity sheets (Appendix G) sent home to parents

- Develop a "Word Wall" with the vocabulary words from selected literature to expose the students to vocabulary words

- Week 1 (Feb. 16)

  Phonemic Awareness Inventory given to all participating students (Appendix C)

- Week 2 (Feb. 22 – 26)

  Pancakes, Pancakes & The Little Red Hen

  Pre and posttest vocabulary for the first unit

  Develop "Word Wall" to introduce vocabulary and word sounds

  Family Literacy Night at the public library (incentive: each family will receive a free book)

- Weeks 3 & 4 (March 1 –12)

  Little Cloud & It Looked Like Spilt Milk

  Pre and posttest vocabulary for the second unit

  Continue "Word Wall"

  Send home Take Home Characters for Journalizing Activity

  Send home the parent letter for the "I Can Read" bulletin board (Appendix F)

  Interactive bulletin board

  Send home monthly calendar and activities

  Parent Workshop – "Introduction to Family Literacy" (Appendix H)

- Weeks 5 & 6 (March 15 – 26)

  The Very Hungry Caterpillar & In the Tall, Tall Grass

  Continue "Word Wall"

  Pre and posttest vocabulary for the third unit

Interactive bulletin board

Send home Take Home Characters for Journalizing Activity

Send home monthly calendar and activities

Send home books on tape

- Weeks 7 & 8 (April 5 – 16)

Jump Frog Jump & Over in the Meadow

Continue "Word Wall"

Pre and posttest for the fourth unit

Send home Take Home Characters for Journalizing Activity

Parent Coffee – "Building Blocks to Reading" (Appendix I)

Culminating Activity for all Families – "Safari Fun Fair"

Send home books on tape

Send home monthly calendar and activities

- Week 9 (April 19 – 23)

The Very Quiet Cricket

Continue "Word Wall"

Pre and posttest for the fifth unit

Send home Take Home Characters for Journalizing Activity

Nightly Make-and-Take Parent Activity (Nursery Rhyme Story Circle)

Send home books on tape

- Weeks 10, 11 & 12 (April 26 – 30 & May 3 - 14)

The Big Red Barn, Silly Sally, & Over on the Farm

Continue "Word Wall"

Pre and posttest for the sixth unit

Send home Take Home Characters for Journalizing Activity

Send home books on tape

Field Trip to a local Petting Zoo

Grandparents Concert (songs were chosen from thematic unit)

Send home monthly calendar and activities

- Weeks 13, 14 & 15 (May 17 – 28)

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom & What's For Lunch

Continue "Word Wall"

Pre & posttest vocabulary for the seventh unit

Send home Take Home Characters for Journalizing Activity

Send home books on tape

Parent Coffee – "Preparing Your Child for Kindergarten"

Family Picnic

Test Phonemic Awareness Inventory

Interactive bulletin board

Beach Party wrap up activity

Test PPVT-III

Methods of Assessment

To assess student improvements of vocabulary development, pre and posttests were administered for each thematic unit (Appendix D). The targeted students were administered a Phonemic Awareness Inventory (PAI) prior to and after concluding the intervention strategies (Appendix C). The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-III) was administered prior to intervention. After the intervention, the PPVT-III was

administered to the children in the study to obtain a final score. By comparing the results of the initial and final test scores, improved scores were noted (Appendix J). Classroom observations were made by the teacher researchers to document the children's use of the classrooms writing and library centers. During observations, the children's book handling behaviors were also noted.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to improve children's language and literacy development through an instructional emphasis on increased vocabulary development and phonemic awareness. During the research period, the teacher researchers provided a variety of practical literacy and language activities to the students in a language rich classroom environment. Each classroom was designed to have reading and writing centers full of a variety of reading materials and writing utensils. These centers became a major focus of instruction and children's activities. The children were exposed to a variety of familiar predictable picture books, literacy materials and thematic units. Data was collected on each child in the study by using pre and posttests. Parent training was also key component of the intervention. The parents had several opportunities to participate in parent workshops and parent and child interaction nights.

The first phase of the action plan was to collect evidence of the problem through parent interview forms, social and medical family histories, Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test scores (PPVT-III) and teacher observations of the children's familiarity with literature and their book handling skills in the classroom environment.

The second phase of the study involved the selection of 14 familiar children's picture books. The chosen books emphasized the main components of phonemic awareness. These components include rhyme, rhythm, alliteration and an enriched vocabulary. These books followed a predictable sequence and pattern typically found in literature designed for preschool aged children. The 14 selected books were divided into seven units. These units lasted from one to three weeks depending on the content of the literature, the number of vocabulary words chosen and student interest. A total of 90 targeted vocabulary words were chosen for intervention. For each unit, 10 – 15 vocabulary words were chosen as pre and posttests (Appendix D). Pre and posttests were developed using a software program titled *Boardmaker*. This program is designed for making communication boards for persons with limited communication skills. The program consists of 3,100 Mayer-Johnson *Picture Communication Symbols* (PCS). The PCS are simple, clear, black and white drawings. Prior to the intervention, 39 children were orally administered the Phonemic Awareness Inventory (PAI) (Appendix C). This inventory assesses whole word discrimination, rhyming words, syllable counting and alliteration.

The third phase of the action plan began the implementation of the language and literacy activities developed from the chosen picture books and units. The following strategies were ongoing throughout the intervention period. Each classroom developed reading and writing centers in the classroom to encourage pre-reading and writing skills. In each reading or library center, predictable children's books were displayed for the children to read. Along with these books, children were exposed to newspapers, catalogs and magazines. The writing centers were developed to provide the children with a

variety of materials to encourage creativity. The writing centers included a surplus of pens, pencils, markers, crayons, letter and number stamps, stencils, notepads, paper and notebooks. The students used print as models and were encouraged to create their own printed materials. Each classroom had a daily name check-in to encourage writing their name and print awareness. Each teacher read children's books and recorded them on tape to be sent them home weekly with the students. Each classroom had a "Take Home Character" (classroom mascot) and journalizing activity that went home nightly. This journalizing activity encouraged the children to take the mascot everywhere they went throughout the day and night. The second stage of the activity was for the children to dictate their encounters into the notebook while the parents wrote in the book. The teacher read their dictation to the class the next day. A "Word Wall" with letters and letter sounds was developed using the vocabulary words from the selected children's books. This activity was done to emphasis the weekly vocabulary words in print and introduced each theme. Vocabulary word sheets were sent home weekly to encourage parent involvement and transfer of the activities (Appendix E). Suggestions on how to practice the vocabulary words were given to the parents. Also, an "I Can Read" bulletin board (Appendix F) was displayed in each classroom using familiar print seen in their environment (i.e. McDonald's, K-Mart). Monthly calendars and activity sheets were sent home to encourage family involvement and at-home reading (Appendix G). Each thematic unit was taught using a multisensory approach. These activities included a variety of songs, finger plays, open-ended art activities, making classroom books, role playing the stories and cooking activities. The classroom teachers taught the vocabulary words using a variety of hands on activities such as showing the actual items (i.e. straw,

jam, coconuts) to the students and using them in their lessons, providing visuals and bringing animals to school (i.e. lamb, frog and hatching chicks). The classroom teachers developed interactive bulletin boards based on the chosen themes and encouraged student participation. The bulletin boards were decorated with thematic artwork that was created by the students to illustrate the stories. Each classroom made a variety of classroom books based on the themes. The students each made a page of the book and then their work was assembled to make a book and shared with the class. The classroom books, which were created by the students, encouraged awareness of print. For further reading, the books were placed in the classroom libraries.

During the second week of intervention, the students were given a pretest and posttest for the first unit: *Pancakes, Pancakes* and *The Little Red Hen*. A "Family Intervention Night" was held at the public library to encourage families to sign up for a library card. As an incentive, each family that attended received a free book. The teacher researchers gave an informal presentation about the importance of reading to children. The video *Read Together, Grow Together*, was shown as part of the presentation. The video gave several ideas for pre-literacy activities for parents to do with their children at home.

During weeks three and four, intervention began on the second unit: *It Looked Like Split Milk* and *Little Cloud*. The first of three parent workshops was held. The workshop was titled "Introduction to Family Literacy" (Appendix H). Families were given practical strategies for reading to young children. Opportunities were given to parents to share ideas, strategies and view a variety children's books on display.

By the fifth week of the intervention, all ongoing classroom activities continued. The thematic units for the fifth and sixth weeks included the books: *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and *In the Tall, Tall Grass.*

During the seventh and eighth weeks of intervention, the second parent workshop was presented. The topic was "Building Blocks to Reading" (Appendix I). Parents were given the foundational skills that each child needs to develop emergent literacy skills.

The ninth week of intervention, an evening Make-and-Take Parent Activity was held. The theme was "Nursery Rhyme Story Circles" and each child completed activities based off of traditional nursery rhymes. The teacher researchers began unit five: *The Very Quiet Cricket.*

For weeks 10, 11, and 12 pre and posttests were administered on thematic unit 6: *The Big Red Barn, Silly, Sally,* and *Over on the Farm.* Each classroom chose songs from the thematic units and practiced their songs for the annual Grandparent's concert. Two of the targeted classrooms went to a local petting zoo to conclude the farm unit. During week 12, the third parent workshop was held. The topic, "Preparing Your Child for Kindergarten", shared skills that children should have prior to entering Kindergarten to make it a successful school experience.

During weeks 13, 14, and 15 all ongoing activities ended for the school year. Final pre and post testing was completed for the last unit: *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* and *What's for Lunch.* All students were administered the (PAI) and the PPVT-III to compare the results with the initial test scores. As a culminating activity, a "beach party"

was held outside based on the final unit. The beach party included: water games, sun tanning, sand play, painting with coconuts and an airplane ride to a tropical location.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

The following assessment tools were utilized to compile data: PPVT-III, (PAI), and pre and posttests on seven thematic units and a year-end parent survey. The results will be described in the following text and attached graphs found in the appendix.

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-III)

The children at this site are identified for the state funded prekindergarten and early childhood special education programs. The children that were involved in the district preschool screening, prior to August 1998, were administered the PPVT-III. Due to changes in the districts preschool screening format, children screened after August were not given the PPVT-III. Upon enrollment in special education, or related speech and language services several children were administered the PPVT-III as part of a formal evaluation. Of the 39 students in the research study 29 were given the PPVT-III. These test scores were recorded as initial PPVT-III test scores. Following the intervention, children were given the PPVT-III. The initial test scores were compared to the final PPVT-III scores (Appendix J). The average range for the PPVT-III is between 85–115. Children's scores that fall in the range of 85-115 on the PPVT-III are considered to be within the average range regarding their receptive language skills. If the score falls below 85 they are considered mild, moderate or severely delayed depending on the total standard score. Prior to the intervention, 15 of the 29 students did not have scores in the average range. The initial scores ranged from 51 to 104. When the children were tested at the end of the intervention, final scores ranged from 87 to 111. The average score on

the PPVT-III, prior to intervention was 84.8. Comparing PPVT-III scores after intervention, the research revealed that 100% of the children in the study did have scores that fell within the normal range. After intervention, the average PPVT-III score was 97. The average increase was 12.8 points.

Phonemic Awareness Inventory (PAI)

The phonemic awareness inventory was administered to each child in the study. The inventory focused on whole word discrimination, rhyming words and listening for long and short words. Initial test scores were compared to final test scores (Appendix J). The PAI has 30 test items. The initial average score was 10.5 out of 30. After intervention, the average score was 16.5. When looking at individual scores, it appeared that the children in the early childhood special education program and the children with significant language delays had more difficulties with the PAI (Appendix C). The alliteration section of the PAI was reported separately. The alliteration portion of the test had six test items. The initial average was 1.3 out of six. Post intervention results were three out of six. This reflects a 28% increase. The teacher researchers found that, the alliteration portion of the test was not appropriate for the children in the study. The children were making associations with the pictures, not the beginning sounds of the pictures. The pictures that were used were too closely related (i.e. quarter, dollar, queen). Many of the children chose the dollar and the quarter because they both represented money. The children in the early childhood special education program had difficulties with the alliteration test due to their significant delays in speech and language. Of the children in this study 71.8% have language disabilities and receive speech and language services.

Pre & Posttests

Throughout the research study, seven thematic units were presented to the students. Each unit was based on familiar picture books. The teacher researchers' focus was to build vocabulary through the use of a variety of language rich activities. Picture symbol pre and posttests were given to the students in the study. A break down of scores was given based on each unit (Appendix K).

Year End Parent Survey

A seven-question survey (Appendix L) was developed and given to the parents of the children in the study. The survey asked questions that related to increased interest in books, parent activities and programs, books on tape, vocabulary development, recognizing familiar print and awareness of rhyming words. The parents were asked to rate the questions on the survey by circling: strongly agree, agree, disagree or does not apply. A total of 39 surveys were given to parents, of those only 15 surveys were returned to the teacher researchers. There were seven questions on the survey. The parents were asked to rate them by circling strongly agree, agree, disagree or not applicable.

The majority of the parents rated the questions strongly agree or agree as documented by the following table that can be found on page number 46:

Table 1

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	N/A
Developed an increased interest in books.	7	8		
I found literacy activities and programs to be helpful.	5	7		3
My child enjoyed listening to the books on tape.	12	2	1	
I have seen growth in my child's vocabulary.	8	6	1	
The take home bags were a good family activity.	7	8		
My child recognizes familiar print.	13	2		
Increased awareness to rhyming words.	6	5	4	
TOTALS=	58	38	6	3

Conclusions and Recommendations

After reviewing current research on the topic of language and literacy development, the teacher researchers designed an action plan based on improving vocabulary and phonemic awareness. Upon examining the results of this project, the teacher researchers found that the targeted students did improve their overall language and literacy development. This increase can be documented by the overall increase on PPVT-III scores. The students increased their PPVT-III scores by an average of 12.8 points. The teacher researchers found that every child did benefit from the intervention, either small or large gains, each child did demonstrate growth as the weeks progressed. The largest amount of growth seen in the children in the special education classroom was their overall awareness of books, print and proper book handling skills. The increased exposure significantly heightened their interaction with books as demonstrated by their attentiveness to storybook reading, participation with songs and fingerplays and the use

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of literacy materials within the classroom environment. The children in the at-risk classrooms demonstrated an improvement in the areas of vocabulary development, rhyming and syllables. The children began to recognize books by the same author and an understanding of an author's role.

The teacher researchers found many strengths in the action plan. The literature-based curriculum heightened the children's awareness of the meaning of print and that books are predictable, repetitive and follow patterns. The children were engaged in the learning experiences as demonstrated by their interest in the reading and writing centers in the classrooms, as well as other projects completed at school and at home. Many of the children used the new strategies to create books at home. The teacher researchers allowed the children to share their books with the classroom. This in turn encouraged other children to broaden the learning experience and make their own books. In both programs, the children's ability to attend to stories greatly increased throughout the intervention period. The use of puppets and interactive felt board activities increased the students' participation. The students were actively involved and engaged in the learning process.

The teacher researchers found that the parent component of the research project was not an effective part of the intervention. During the intervention, the parents were given several opportunities to gain more information about language and literacy development. It was found that the attendance for the three parent workshops held during the workday were minimal. One recommendation would be to alternate morning and afternoon sessions to accommodate all working parents. The two evening programs gave the parents opportunities to interact with their child in a school environment. The parent

interaction nights had a greater attendance than the parent workshops held during the workday.

The books on tape were found to be a success with not only the children but also the parents. The teacher researchers received many positive comments regarding the enjoyment of the books on tape. The children were very excited to hear their own teacher's voice reading the story to them. Parents reported that they listened to the tapes over and over again.

Each teacher researcher developed a Word Wall. As the targeted words were taught, they were arranged on the bulletin board by the beginning letter of each word. This provided additional support and awareness. The word walls provided exposure, but the concept was difficult for the children to process at this age. Both programs found that this was not a necessary component of the action research project.

The teacher researchers recommend doing fewer units over a longer period of time. In this research project the units lasted from one to three weeks. As the children became more involved in the units, there was enough material and excitement to continue the activities for longer than they were planned. The teacher researchers felt limited to only using the books that were chosen. Another approach would have been to pick themes and several books to select the targeted vocabulary.

A great amount of time was spent giving the pretests. A solution to this problem would be to test all the vocabulary words prior to any intervention. Once the targeted vocabulary was selected for all units the pretests could have been given prior to any intervention. This may have limited the time that was spent testing. Although the teacher researchers do feel that the pre and posttests did reveal accurate data on the

student's improved language skills, the amount of testing was inappropriate for preschool children.

The teacher researchers identified several difficulties with the intervention project. Prior to starting the intervention, it was difficult to assess the students' developmental levels and their vocabulary development. This was due to the fact that not all students were given the PPVT-III prior to the start of the study.

During the intervention the following problems may have interfered with the study. There were several shortened school weeks, which negatively effected the pre and posttest scores. During shortened weeks there was not enough time to present all of the activities to the children. Frequent absences made it difficult to complete all the needed testing. If the child did not take pretest prior to instruction on the content, the posttest score was not administered. The teacher researchers also felt that it was an unnatural environment to test young children in a one-on-one environment. As the weeks progressed, it was noted that the not all of the chosen words and pictures symbols used for the pre and posttests were appropriate for young children. Many of the pictures and concepts were too abstract (Appendix D) for young children. The use of real-life objects would have been more concrete and easier to teach the vocabulary words to the children. Objects were used to facilitate the teaching, but not used during testing. The actual book, text and pictures in the book could have been used instead of developing a separate test.

The teacher researchers believe that improving language and literacy at a young age builds a strong foundation for future reading success. Therefore, the recommendation is for teachers to continue to provide pre-reading and writing experiences and to provide exposure to a variety of reading materials. Educators now

know, based on emergent literacy research, that an important breakthrough in the literacy process occurs when a child knows a book so well that he/she can tell if any portion of the text has been skipped or changed. Daily book reading is crucial to vocabulary development of young children.

Overall, all children benefited from participation in the presented activities. Children with at-risk factors and children with disabilities in particular made significant gains on standardized and nonstandardized tests. Formal observations revealed growth in early literacy development and book handling skills, as well as vocabulary development.

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APPENDIX A

AT-RISK CRITERIA

Name _____ D.O.B. _____

Date _____ Language _____

LEVEL I – 5pts.

ECONOMIC
- ☐ FEDERAL LUNCH PROGRAM
- ☐ SUBSIDIZED HOUSING
- ☐ PUBLIC AID
- ☐ HEAD START ELIGIBLE
- ☐ WIC
- ☐ MEDICAID

HEALTH
- ☐ CHRONIC EAR INFECTIONS (4/YEAR)
- ☐ NUTRITIONAL PROBLEMS
- ☐ SEZURES
- ☐ LEAD EXPOSURE
- ☐ ADHA (DX)
- ☐ VISION
- ☐ HEARING
- ☐ OTHER

BIRTH/PRENATAL
- ☐ LIMITED PRENATAL CARE
- ☐ AGE OF MOTHER
- ☐ PRE/POST DELIVERY HIGH RISK
- ☐ LOW BIRTH WEIGHT
- ☐ OXYGEN DEPRIVATION
- ☐ CONGENTIAL ANOMALIES
- ☐ FAILURE TO THRIVE
- ☐ FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME
- ☐ FETAL DISTRESS
- ☐ OTHER

LEVEL II – 4 pts.

PARENTING/HOME ENVIRONMENT
- ☐ KNOWLEDGE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
- ☐ EFFECTIVE/POSITIVE INTERACTION
- ☐ CONSISTENCY OF CARE
- ☐ BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT SKILLS
- ☐ FAMILY STRUCTURE
- ☐ COMMUNICATION SKILLS
- ☐ LIMITED SUPPORT
- ☐ LOSS/DEATH/ DIVORCE
- ☐ LOSS OF JOB
- ☐ PARENT EDUCATION LEVEL
- ☐ OTHER

ABUSE/NEGLECT
(founded)
- ☐ FOSTER CARE
- ☐ HOMEMAKER
- ☐ SHELTERS
- ☐ RESTRAINING ORDER
- ☐ COURT SUPERVISION
- ☐ HOMELESSNESS
- ☐ OTHER

___PRIVATE PRESCHOOL

___PRESCHOOL REF.

___HEADSTART

LEVEL III – 3 pts.

SPEECH/LANGUAGE
- ☐ EXPRESSIVE
- ☐ RECEPTIVE
- ☐ PROCESSING
- ☐ ARTICULATION
- ☐ FLUENCY
- ☐ OTHER

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL
- ☐ SELF CONTROL
- ☐ SEPARATION FROM CAREGIVER
- ☐ RESPECT FOR SELF AND OTHERS
- ☐ ATTENTION SPAN
- ☐ SELF-HELP SKILLS
- ☐ SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
- ☐ OTHER

LEARNING SKILLS
- ☐ BODY PARTS
- ☐ CONCEPTS
- ☐ COLORS
- ☐ NUMBERS
- ☐ KNOWS PERSONAL DATA
- ☐ SORTS SHAPES
- ☐ OTHER

VISION _____

HEARING _____

LEVEL IV – 2 pts.

ESL
- ☐ PRIMARY HOME LANGUAGE IS NON-ENGLISH

FINE MOTOR
- ☐ PENCIL GRASP
- ☐ CUTTING SKILLS
- ☐ VISUAL MOTOR INTEGRATION: MATCHING, COPYING, BLOCK-BUILDING

GROSS MOTOR
- ☐ WALKING
- ☐ JUMPING
- ☐ CATCHING
- ☐ BALANCING

_____

_____

LEVEL I RESPONSES

_____X 5=_____

LEVEL II RESPONSES

_____X 4=_____

LEVEL III RESPONSES

_____X 3=_____

LEVEL IV RESPONSES

_____X 2=_____

TOTAL _____

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APPENDIX B

PARENT INTERVIEW FORM/SOCIAL MEDICAL HISTORY

PARENT INTERVIEW FORM
Date:

GENERAL INFORMATION

A - Family:

•**Child:**_____Birthdate_____ Age _____

___ Adopted ____ Foster Name preferred _____ Girl _____ Boy _____

Address_____

• **Father:**_____Birthdate_____

___ biological ___step ___divorced ___married ___deceased ___separated

Address_____Home phone _____

Occupation and Employer _____Work phone_____ Work hours____

Highest level of education_____

• **Mother:**_____Birthdate_____

___ biological ___step ___divorced ___married ___deceased ___separated

Address_____ Home phone _____

Occupation and Employer_____Work phone_____ Work hours____

Highest level of education_____

• **Other members of child's household:**

Name	Relationship	Age

• **Agencies or community programs currently used by family** (check ALL that apply)

__ Headstart
__ Subsidized housing
__ Private preschool
__ Play group
ADC
__ Birth to Three
__ Federal Lunch
__ Park District
__ WIC
__ Other:
__ Child & Family Rehab
__ Sunday School
__ Library story hour
__ Public Aid
__ Daycare

B - Child's Medical & Health History

• Health concerns noticed by parent or reported by a doctor

__asthma
__convulsions
__stuttering
__heart trouble
__bed wetting
__hyperactivity
__allergies
__stomach aches
__chronic ear infections (more than 3 per year)
__vision problems
__nightmares
__thumbsucking
__lead exposure
__coordination problems (climbing, riding)
__Indigestion
__nail biting
__constipation
__epilepsy (seizures)
__diarrhea
__diabetes
__headaches
__fatigue
__serious blows to the head
__sinus trouble
__ADD/ADHD (diagnosed by a professional)
__hearing problems
__other:_____

• Hospitalization or surgery

age _____
reason(s) _____

• Serious injury (broken bones, falls, burns, poisoning)

age _____
injury _____

• Serious illness

age _____
illness _____

C - Birth Mother's Pregancy & Childbirth History

	Yes	No	Effects on child, if any
toxemia			
high blood pressure			
measles, mumps or chicken pox			
labor longer than 24 hours			
induced labor			
forceps delivery			
breech delivery			
Cesarean delivery			
other complications			

Number of visits to physician during preganancy___
Birthplace: __hospital __home __ other
__ More than 2 weeks premature delivery __ more than 3 weeks late
Mother's age at delivery___

D - Child's Condition at Birth:

__fetal distress
__blue spells
__convulsions
__sucking difficulty
__low birth weight (less than 5 pounds)
__other:_____
__jaundice
__oxygen deprivation
__rash
__crying difficulty
__extended stay in hospital

E - Child's Developmental History:

	Age (approximate year, month)
sits up without help	
crawls	
walks alone	
speaks first words	
feeds self	
dresses self	
independent use of toilet	

F - Child's Home Environment

Primary caretaker_____

Amount of time spent with mother each day _____
typical activities:_____
Amount of time spent with father each day _____
typical activities: _____
Favorite family activities: _____

Child's regular responsibilities or chores_____

Helpful responses to times when child is tired, hungry, sick, crying, etc. _____

Things that trigger arguments between child and siblings or friends _____

Typical discipline used by mother _____
Typical discipline used by father _____
Typical discipline used by other caregivers _____

Most effective discipline _____
Least effective discipline _____

Amount of time each week child
watches TV _____
plays with electronic games or computers_____
plays outside _____
plays with other children his/her age _____
listens to stories read out loud _____
Child's favorite activity: _____

G - Speech and Language Development

Other language(s) understood or spoken by child _____

• **Typical behaviors** (Check ALL that apply):

__puts words together in correct order
__follows 2-3 step directions
__seems to have trouble hearing
__seems frustrated because (s)he can't be understood
__stutters
__is hard to understand
__other speech concerns:
_____
_____

H - Social & Emotional Development

• **Typical behaviors** (Check ALL that apply):

__accepts new people and situations
__has trouble separating from parent(s)
__plays well with children his own age
__seems curious and interested in new things
__temper tantrums
__shares possessions
__can take turns easily
__plays well alone
__distractable

• **Unusual Circumstances**

Recent events that may have affected child negatively: _____
_____

Past events that continue to affect child negatively_____
_____

I - Other

Why did you bring your child to screening?_____
_____

Do you have any concerns regarding your child's development?_____

Will your child be entering school in fall?___ Where?_____

If your child qualifies, will you give consent for him/her to participate in the PreCede "at risk" preschool (PreCede) program at Westwood?____

If your child is enrolled at Westwood, would (s)he need transportation to or from an address other than his/her home address?___

To_____

From _____

APPENDIX C

PHONEMIC AWARENESS INVENTORY

Phonemic-Awareness Inventory

Student Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Give this inventory orally to each student.

1 Level 1

Whole Word Discrimination

Are these words the same? (Circle words child identifies correctly.)

fat–bat	red–rid	slip–slit
dip–hip	nut–nut	grip–grip
man–man	mat–map	flit–flip

Rhyming Words—Recognition

Do these words rhyme? (Circle words child identifies correctly.)

happy–sappy	boy–toy	sun–fun
sad–mad	girl–boy	play–game

Rhyming Words—Application

What word rhymes with . . . ? (Write child's responses on the lines.)

man _____	old _____	try _____
sun _____	play _____	skip _____
eat _____	book _____	scale _____

Syllable Counting

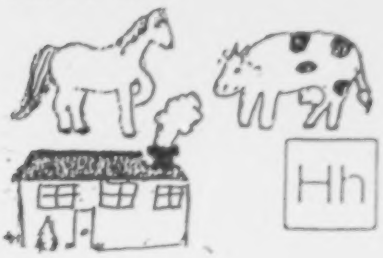
How many syllables do you hear in the word . . . ? (Write child's responses on the lines and circle those that are correct.)

ball _____	wagon _____	umbrella _____
elephant _____	hippopotamus _____	orangutan _____

Which two picture-names begin with the letter "S"?

Ss

Which two picture-names begin with the letter "H"?

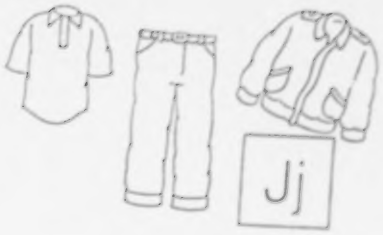


Hh

Which two picture-names begin with the letter "Q"?

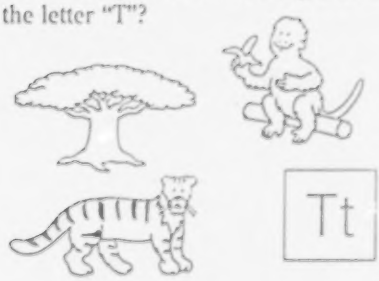
Qq

Which two picture-names begin with the letter "J"?



Jj

Which two picture-names begin with the letter "T"?



Tt

Which two picture-names begin with the letter "C"?

Cc

APPENDIX D

PRE AND POSTTEST VOCABULARY WORDS AND PICTURES

Title: Pancakes, Pancakes

Author: Eric Carle

Student's Name:

Date:

jelly, jam

Pre-test

Post-test

mixing bowl

Pre-test

Post-test

wheat

Pre-test

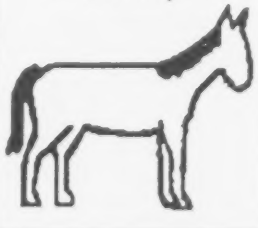
Post-test

flour

Pre-test

Post-test

donkey



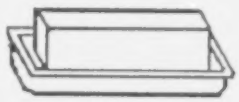
Pre-test

Post-test

Title: Pancakes, Pancakes Author: Eric Carle

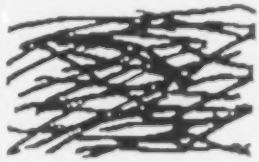
Student's Name: Date:

butter



Pre-test Post-test

straw



Pre-test Post-test

wooden spoon

Pre-test Post-test

pancakes

Pre-test Post-test

frying pan

Pre-test Post-test

Title: Little Cloud & It Looked Split Milk

Authors: Eric Carle & Charles G. Shaw

Student's ID#: Date:

clouds

Pre-test Post-test

downward

Pre-test Post-test

sheep

Pre-test Post-test

raining

Pre-test Post-test

top

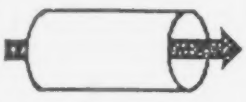
Pre-test Post-test

Title: Little Cloud & It Looked Split Milk

Authors: Eric Carle & Charles G. Shaw

Student's ID#: Date:

through

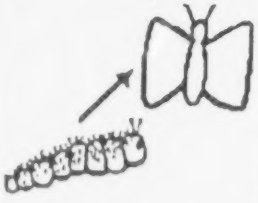


Pre-test Post-test

spilt

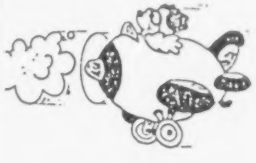
Pre-test Post-test

change



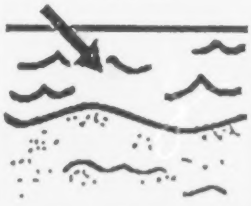
Pre-test Post-test

behind



Pre-test Post-test

waves



Pre-test Post-test

Title: Little Cloud & It Looked Split Milk

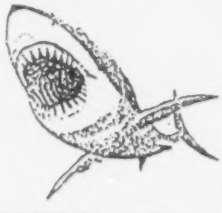
Authors: Eric Carle & Charles G. Shaw

Student's ID#: Date:

upward

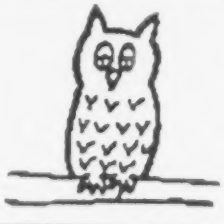
Pre-test Post-test

shark



Pre-test Post-test

Great Horned Owl



Pre-test Post-test

squirrel

Pre-test Post-test

bottom

Pre-test Post-test

Title: The Very Hungry Caterpillar

Authors: Eric Carle & Denise Flemming

Student's ID#: Date:

leaf

Pre-test Post-test

plums

Pre-test Post-test

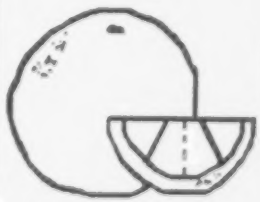
cocoon

Pre-test Post-test

pickles

Pre-test Post-test

orange



Pre-test Post-test

Title: The Very Hungry Caterpillar

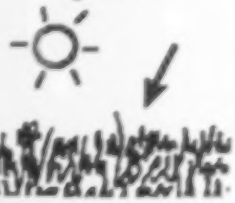
Authors: Eric Carle & Denise Flemming

Student's ID#: Date:

tiny

Pre-test Post-test

grass



Pre-test Post-test

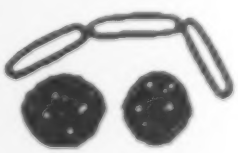
tall

Pre-test Post-test

pear

Pre-test Post-test

sausage



Pre-test Post-test

Title: The Very Hungry Caterpillar

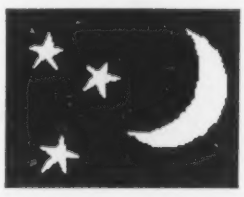
Authors: Eric Carle & Charles G. Shaw

Student's ID#: Date:

caterpillar

Pre-test Post-test

moon

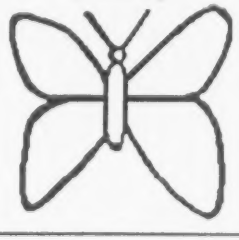


Pre-test Post-test

morning

Pre-test Post-test

butterfly



Pre-test Post-test

egg

Pre-test Post-test

Title: Over in the Meadow

Author: Ezra Jack Keats

Student's ID#: Date:

nest

Pre-test Post-test

meadow

Pre-test Post-test

crow

Pre-test Post-test

lizard

Pre-test Post-test

muskrat

Pre-test Post-test

Title: Jump Frog Jump

Author: Robert Kalan

Student's ID#: Date:

branch

Pre-test Post-test

pond

Pre-test Post-test

jump

Pre-test Post-test

net

Pre-test Post-test

climb

Pre-test Post-test

Title: Jump Frog Jump

Author: Robert Kalan

Student's ID#: Date:

frog

Pre-test Post-test

snake

Pre-test Post-test

fish

Pre-test Post-test

turtle

Pre-test Post-test

basket

Pre-test Post-test

Title: The Very Quiet Cricket

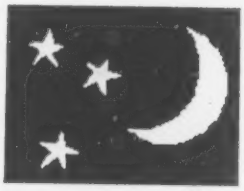
Author: Eric Carle

Student's ID#: Date:

moth

Pre-test Post-test

night



Pre-test Post-test

bee

Pre-test Post-test

quiet

Pre-test Post-test

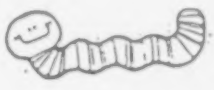
dragonfly

Pre-test Post-test

Title: The Very Quiet Cricket

Authors: Eric Carle

Student's ID#: Date:

worm 	Pre-test	Post-test
mosquito	Pre-test	Post-test
cricket	Pre-test	Post-test
wings	Pre-test	Post-test
praying mantis	Pre-test	Post-test

Title: Big Red Barn

Author: Margaret Wise Brown

Student's ID#: Date:

barn

Pre-test Post-test

pig

Pre-test Post-test

weather vane

Pre-test Post-test

mouse

Pre-test Post-test

goose

Pre-test Post-test

Title: Big Red Barn

Author: Margaret Wise Brown

Student's ID#: Date:

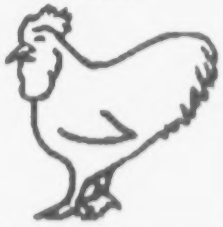
goat

Pre-test Post-test

corn

Pre-test Post-test

rooster



Pre-test Post-test

cow

Pre-test Post-test

sleep

Pre-test Post-test

Title: Over on the Farm

Author: Christopher Gunson

Student's ID#: Date:

farm

Pre-test Post-test

splash

Pre-test Post-test

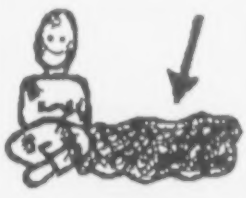
beehive

Pre-test Post-test

hop

Pre-test Post-test

muddy



Pre-test Post-test

Title: Over on the Farm & Silly Sally

Author: Christopher Gunson & Audrey Wood

Student's ID#: Date:

fox

Pre-test Post-test

roll

Pre-test Post-test

backwards

Pre-test Post-test

upside down

Pre-test Post-test

forward

Pre-test Post-test

Title: Chicka, Chicka, Boom Boom

Authors: Bill Martin Jr. & John Archambault

Student's ID#: Date:

knee

Pre-test Post-test

palm tree

Pre-test Post-test

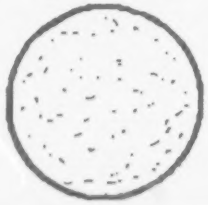
alphabet

Pre-test Post-test

beach

Pre-test Post-test

coconut



Pre-test Post-test

Title: What's For Lunch

Authors: Eric Carle

Student's ID#:

Date:

lemon

Pre-test

Post-test

cherries

Pre-test

Post-test

banana

Pre-test

Post-test

grapes

Pre-test

Post-test

raspberries

Pre-test

Post-test

APPENDIX E

PARENT VOCABULARY WORDS AND PICTURES

Title: Over in the Meadow
Author: Ezra Jack Keats

Title: Jump Frog Jump
Author: Robert Kalan

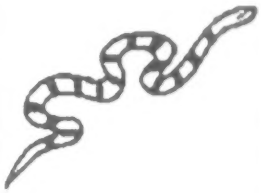
nest

frog

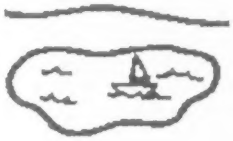
branch

meadow

snake



pond



crow

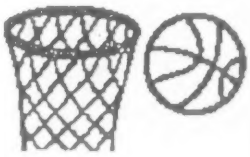
fish

jump

lizard

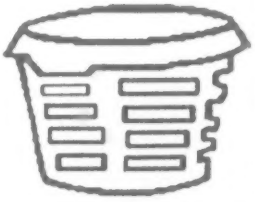
turtle

net



muskrat

basket



climb

APPENDIX F

I CAN READ BULLETIN BOARD ACTIVITY

I CAN READ

Dear Parents,

Believe it or not your child is beginning to read! There are many familiar words that your child sees on a regular basis that he/she can read. For example, many children can recognize the word "BULLS" from seeing it on clothes, commercials, etc. The word McDonalds is another example.

We are providing your child with a print rich environment within our classroom and we would like you to help add more print to our classroom. We plan to decorate a bulletin board in our room with words that are commonly seen. Your child's homework is to:

1. Look in a magazine, on a box, an ad, etc. and find a word that your child may recognize. Some ideas: a Disney movie, McDonalds, Wendys ,Burger King, Stop sign, a favorite cereal , food, or drink, a favorite sports team, a favorite character from a TV show, etc.

2. Cut it out and glue it on the attached index card. Please try to find a word that is big enough so that we would be able to see it when we put it on the board.

3. Send the word back any time next week.

Thanks, Ms. Beth, Ms. Tricia, & Ms Jeanette

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APPENDIX G

CALENDAR HOME ACTIVITIES

1998-99 Early Childhood Activities Calendar - February

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 *Groundhog Day* Let your child help set the table for dinner. Let the child practice counting out forks, plates, or cups.	3 Story Time	4 Make a story block. Draw or cut out pictures and paste them on all sides of an empty milk carton. Let your child tell stories by turning to the different pictures.	5 Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games with your child.	6 Library Outing
7 Cookie Creations	8 Help your child write and send a letter to a friend. Decorate it with markers or crayons.	9 Rhyme 'N Play	10 Make Valentines and send them to special friends. Either use purchased cards or make your own out of colored paper. Let your child write or trace his or her name on each.	11	12 *Abraham Lincoln's Birthday*	13 Cut five different size of hearts out of paper. Mix them up and place them in a pile. Let your child line up the hearts from smallest to largest.
14 *Valentine's Day* Name four things that begin with the "B" sound. Now create a poem or story using the four "B" words.	15 *President's Day*	16 Teach your child the "Golden Rule" (treat others as you would like to be treated). Talk about what it means and how it can be followed.	17 *Ash Wednesday*	18 Play the "Color Game." Point to solid-colored objects and ask your child what the color of each is. Repeat the name of the color and let your child guess the first letter in each word.	19 Story Time	20
21 Story Time	22 *George Washington's Birthday*	23	24 Play "Search and Match" With your child. Collect as many pairs of shoes as you can find in your house. Mix them up and place them in a pile. Let your child match up the shoes in pairs.	25 Rhyme 'N Play	26 Talk about the difference between night and day. Let your child draw a "night" picture and "day" picture. Print the words "day" and "night" on each. Let your child trace the letters.	27 Library Outing
28	FEBRUARY 2000					

Return to January PREV UP NEXT February Tip of the Month

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1998-99 Early Childhood Activities Calendar - February

February Tip of the Month

Create a special place for children to read and write that is well lit and comfortable.

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. Start by choosing books that are written for children and have brightly colored, simple pictures. As you read, let your child point to the pictures and talk about what is happening to the characters and which character he or she likes best. Be sure to read with lots of enthusiasm so that your child can tell you're enjoying the story as well!

Visit the local public library with your child. Find out the days and times of special activities or story hours for children that take place in February. Mark the dates on your calendar so you remember to attend.

Ingredients:

- *3/4 cup shortening*
- *1 cup sugar*
- *2-1/2 cups flour*
- *1 teaspoon salt*
- *2 eggs*
- *1 teaspoon baking powder*
- *1 teaspoon vanilla*

Mix shortening, sugar, one egg, and vanilla. Blend flour, baking powder, and salt. Cover chill one hour. Roll dough 1/8 inch thick on lightly floured board. Using cookie cutter, cut in desired shapes. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Mix one egg yolk with 1/4 teaspoon water, then divide into three containers. Add a different drop of food coloring to each container and mix. Using small brushes, paint the cookies. Bake 6-8 minutes in a 400 degree oven. You can also use ready-made cookie rolls and frosting from the grocery store.

Make up hand and body movements to go with the words. Let your child follow along.

I'm a little teapot, short and stout.
Here is my handle, here is my spout.
When I get all steamed up, then I shout.
Just tip me over and pour me out

Return to February PREV UP NEXT March

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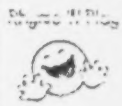
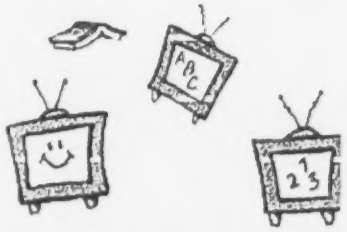
1998-99 Early Childhood Activities Calendar - March

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 	2 *Dr. Seuss's Birthday* Print two sets of alphabet letters: one upper case (capitals), one lower case (small letters). Cut the letters out, mix them up, and play a match-up game with your child (A-a, B-b, C-c).	3	4 Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games with your child.	5	Library Outing
7 Help your child think of an imaginary land. Make up a story of silly characters who live in this imaginary place.	8	9 Story Time	10 With your child, count out the number of forks, spoons, napkins, cups, and plates needed for dinner and let your child set the table.	11 Rhyme 'N Play	12 Watch a children's movie with your child. Talk about what is real and what is pretend in the movie after it is over.	
14 Rhyme 'n Play	15 Plan a "green" dinner. Let your child think of green foods to serve (e.g., celery with cream cheese, green beans, lettuce, green apples, or cabbage) or add a drop of green food coloring to scrambled eggs.	16	17 *St. Patrick's Day* Go for a walk with your child. Find a safe spot of dirt or sand and let your child draw shapes and letters in the ground with a stick.	18	19 Story Time	*First Day of Spring*
21	22 Story Time	23 Watch an educational TV show with your child. Talk about the child's favorite part of the show. What new things did your child learn?	24	25 Play "Word Rhyme" with your child. Take turns thinking of silly words and saying as many words that rhyme as you can (e.g., fly, by, my, pie, why, sky, shy).	26	Library Outing
28 *Palm Sunday*	29 Play "Pat-a-Cake" with your child.	30	31 *Passover begins at sundown*	MARCH 1999 		

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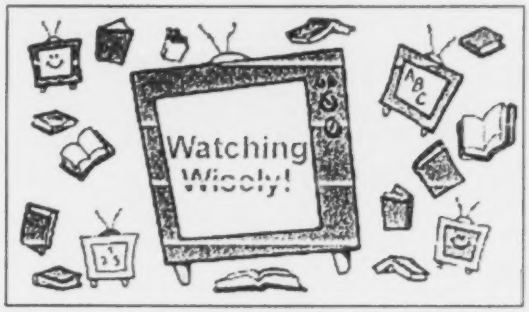
1998-99 Early Childhood Activities Calendar - March



March Tip of the Month

Limit TV viewing to no more than two hours a night. Help children make other choices for their free time activities (e.g., reading, writing, playing, talking).

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. Find a quiet corner where you and your child can look at the books your child chooses. March is a great month to look at books that help your child learn about colors, numbers, or letters.

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with you child. Try "Story Time" just before bedtime. Let your child pick the books he or she wants to read. It will help your child settle down for sleep.

Rhyme 'N Play

Follow the motions with your child.

Open, shut them,
Open, shut them,
Give a little clap!
Open, shut them,
Open, shut them,
Lay them on your lap.

Have your child stand in a safe place. Ask him or her to open and close their eyes, then mouth, then hands. Have your child show you how he or she can open and close arms. Now repeat the rhyme.

Watch Me Grow

Materials:

- *egg carton*
- *bean seeds*
- *potting soil*

Poke a small hole in the bottom of each cup and fill cups with soil. Plant two bean seeds in each cup. Water the soil and put the cups in a sunlit place. Check every couple of days and water if the soil is dry. Every few days, check to see how the seeds are growing. Measure the sprouts and keep a record of their size on the lid of the egg carton.

Return to March PREV UP NEXT April

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1998-99 Early Childhood Activities Calendar - April

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
APRIL 1999				1 *Passover* Story Time	2 Read or tell a favorite story with your child. When you finish, ask your child to tell you what happens first, second, and last in the story.	3
4 *Easter Sunday* Story Time	5 Make your child laugh! Tell a joke, read a funny story or poem, sing a silly song, or draw a cartoon.	6	7 Play a game by counting how many square-shaped objects your child can find today. How many round ones? Which shape won (more squares or circles)?	8 Rhyme 'N Play	9 *Good Friday* Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games with your child.	10 Library Outing
11	12 Rhyme 'N Play	13 Help your child name the letters of the alphabet in newspaper or magazine headlines. Can your child find the letters of his or her own name there?	14	15 Cut the tops off of three carrots. Have your child place them in a shallow dish with 1/2 cup of water. Water daily. Have your child measure the green tops as they grow.	16 Candy Crystals	17
18 Story Time	19 Talk about a favorite family tradition with your child. What month is it celebrated in? Have your child name the months of the year with you.	20	21	22 *Earth Day* Let your child help set the table for dinner. Practice counting out forks, plates, or cups.	23	24 Library Outing
25 Help your child make a puzzle by cutting an old photo, greeting card, or calendar picture into large pieces. Let him or her put the pieces back together on a sheet of paper.	26	27	28 Story Time	29	30 *Arbor Day*	

Return to March April Tip of the Month

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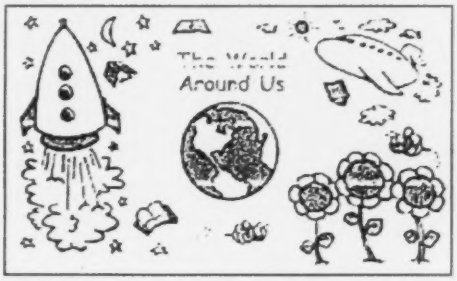

April Tip of the Month

Encourage your child to experience and discover new things. The more opportunities children have to see and do, the more they will understand the world around them.

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. Children who learn to love books will be children who grow up to be good readers. The very best time for children to learn to love books is while they are young. You can help them by making story time a regular part of their day.

Ingredients:

- *1 cup boiling water*
- *1 cup sugar*
- *1 pencil*
- *1 glass jar*
- *3 pieces of string*

Combine the water and sugar in a dish. Stir until the sugar is dissolved. Cool slightly. Carefully pour the water into a jar. Tie the string to a pencil. Balance the pencil across the top of the jar with the string hanging inside. Crystals will begin to form in a few hours. Check every few days. Ask your child questions about what is happening. Does the candy feel hard or soft? Does it taste sweet or sour? Which is the shortest piece, which is longest? Is the candy growing fast or slowly?

Follow the motions with your child.

Five little monkeys
jumping on the bed,
One fell off and
bumped his head.
Momma called the
doctor and the doctor
said,
"No more monkeys
jumping on the bed!"

Repeat using:

Four little monkeys
Three little monkeys
Two little monkeys
One little monkey
jumping on the bed.
He fell off and bumped
his head.
Momma called the
doctor,
and the doctor said,
"No more monkeys
jumping on the bed!"

Visit the local public library with your child. Take your child to the children's section to pick out books to take home, read, and return during the next visit. As soon as children are able to write their name, they can apply for a library card of their own.

Return to April PREV UP NEXT May

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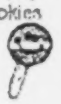
1998-99 Early Childhood Activities Calendar - May

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
MAY 1999						1 Library Outing
2 Read the newspaper comics with your child. Let your child choose a favorite one to cut out, and have your child tell you what is happening in the picture. Your child can even make up a story to go with the pictures!	3 Story Time	4 Make a bouquet of flowers out of opened-up cupcake liners. Write a message at the center of each flower for someone special. Glue or tape a straw or popsicle stick for a stem. Tie the flowers together with a ribbon.	5	6 Rhyme 'N Play	7 Help your child make an indoor fort using a sheet, blanket, or towel. "Build" it over chairs. Let your child read books with a flashlight inside the fort.	8
9 *Mother's Day* Lollipop Cookies	10 Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games, do a puzzle, or sing songs with your child.	11 Rhyme 'N Play	12 Cut the letters in your child's name out of a magazine. Let your child glue the letters in the right order on a piece of paper. He or she can also cut out pictures to decorate around the name.	13	14	15 Let your child use chalk to make sidewalk drawings. Draw a circle on a square. Ask your child to drawn animals out of the shapes.
16 Go for a nature walk. Take an empty egg carton to collect treasures along the way. Later, let your child glue the things that have been collected on paper and write the name next to each item.	17 Rhyme 'N Play	18 Play the color game. Point to items around the house or outside and have your child tell you what color you are pointing to.	19 Story Time	20	21 Sketch an American flag on a piece of paper. Tear up pieces of red, white, and blue construction paper and have your child glue the pieces onto the picture, making, a "mosaic" flag.	22 Lollipop Cookies 
23	24	25 Give your child a simple job to do, such as cleaning up toys, washing a sink, or feeding a pet. Have your child look at a clock at the beginning and the end of the job. Did the clock change?	26 Rhyme 'N Play	27 Put together a costume box for your child. Have your child dress up in old clothes, hats, scares, and shoes. Then, your child and friends can act out a favorite story or make up a new one!	28	29 Library Outing
30 *Memorial Day (traditional)* Story Time	31 *Memorial Day (observed)*					

Return to April May Tip of the Month

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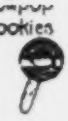
May Tip of the Month

Keep writing materials such as washable, nontoxic crayons and markers, paints and brushes, and different kinds of paper where children can reach them.

Lollipop Cookies



Ingredients:

- *3/4 cup shortening*
- *1 cup sugar*
- *2-1/2 cups flour*
- *1 teaspoon salt*
- *popsicle sticks*
- *2 eggs*
- *1 teaspoon baking power*
- *1 teaspoon vanilla*

Mix shortening, sugar, one egg, and vanilla. Blend in flour, baking power, and salt. Cover; chill one hour. Roll dough into a long log that is 2-1/2 inches wide. Refrigerate one hour. Slice in 1/4 inch circles; place on ungreased cookie sheet. Paint cookies by mixing one egg yolk with 1/4 teaspoon water. Divide paint into three containers; add a drop of food coloring to each. Using small brushes, paint the cookies. Place a stick in the dough to create a "lollipop." Bake 6-8 minutes in a 400 degree oven. You can also use ready-made cookie rolls and frosting from the grocery store.

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. Find out the days and times of special activities or story hours for children that take place in May. Mark the dates on your calendar so you can remember to attend!

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. As your child is having fun hearing the stories, you are helping the child learn to think, and put ideas and words together. Use different voices for the characters in the book, use a puppet or a stuffed toy to tell the story, or let your child "read" the book to you by looking at the pictures and making up the story.

Fingers in Play

Have your child follow along, holding up the number of fingers as you say the rhyme.

One, two,
Buckle my shoe.
Three, four,
Shut the door
Five, six,
Pick up sticks.
Seven, eight,
Lay them
straight.
Nine, ten, a big
fat hen.

Now have your child jump or hop each time you say a number.

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Return to Index

APPENDIX H

FAMILY LITERACY – PARENT HAND-OUT

We must do more to ensure that every child can read well and independently by the end of the third grade. The America Reads Challenge will accomplish this by marshaling the resources of the entire communities – schools and libraries, religious institutions, universities, college students and senior citizens – work together with teachers and parents to teach our children to read.

-President Bill Clinton

Where American Children Stand in Reading Nationally and Internationally

- More than one child in six has problems learning to read during the first three years of school.
  (NAEP, 1996, U.S. Department of Education).

- Children who do not learn to read comprise over fifty percent of the special education population, and thirty-five percent of these learning disabled children drop out of school.
  (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 1996).

- Between 60% and 70% of parents and teachers agree that reading is the most important subject for students to learn.
  (American Federation of Teachers, 1994).

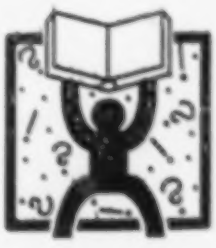
A Peek into Literate Homes

(reading and writing)

- Reading Materials – Tons!
- Bookshelves with 30 – 50 books
- Family favorites read over, and over, and over again!
- Bedtime story rituals (pointing, questioning, commenting)
- 3 – 4 books read every night
- child "reading" to a stuffed animal
- Library books for both parent and child
- Newspapers
- Magazines
- TV Guide, junk mail, bills, letters, cards, lists, schedules
- Notes on the refrigerator
- Magnetic letters on the refrigerator

- Reading recipes
- Grocery lists
- The cereal box
- Familiar signs
  (K-Mart, Pizza Hut, McDonald's)
- Lined and unlined paper
- pencils, pens, markers, crayons, chalk
- index cards, envelopes, notepads, stationary, checks, chalkboards
- Write and mail notes, cards, and pictures to relatives!

Adopted from: CLASSROOMS THAT WORK They Can All read and Write
Patricia M. Cunningham
Richard L. Allington



Reading and Writing Encounters of Preschoolers, help to develop these 4 critical understandings:

1. They know that ideas and words can be written down.

2. They know that when you read or write there is a story or some information that you are trying to understand or communicate.

3. They know that reading and writing are two important things that bigger people do and since they want to be big too, they must learn.

4. They know from overwhelming adult pleasure and approval of their fledging attempts at pretend reading, of their reading of some signs and labels, and their writing that they are succeeding at mastering these skills. Hooray!

Reading with Preschoolers:

In addition to reading books to preschoolers while they listen, it is important to discuss the books with them.

PEER sequence & CROWD prompts/questions:

In the PEER sequence,

- P Parent initiates an exchange about the book, and
- E Evaluates the child's response,
- E Expands on the child's response, and
- R Repeats the initial question to check that the child understands the new learning.

Using CROWD questions,

- C Completion questions about the structure of language in the book.
- R Recall questions related to the story content of the book.
- O Open-ended questions to increase the amount of talk about the book and to focus on the detail.
- W "Wh" questions to teach new vocabulary.
- D Distancing questions that help children bridge the materials in the book to their real life experience.

APPENDIX I

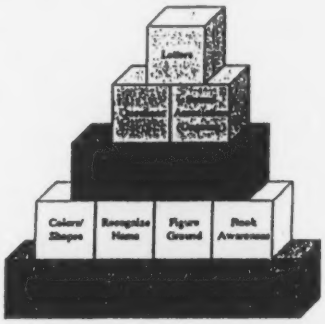
BUILDING BLOCKS – PARENT HAND-OUT

Building Blocks

To

Reading Readiness

Building Blocks to
Reading Readiness



Visual Scanning

- left to right progression
- have your finger follow the words on the page from left to right
- top to bottom progression
- during most learning experiences present information in a left to right format
- provide exposure to a variety of reading materials
  - children's picture books
  - story books
  - magazines
  - newspapers
  - notes and cards
  - cookbooks

Match

- object to object
- object to picture
- picture to picture
- things that go together (cup and saucer, toothbrush and toothpaste, etc)

Label

- Receptive - the child's ability to recognize or identify an object
  - point to you shoes (the child would point to their shoes)
  - bring me your coat (the child would go and get the coat)
  - point to a picture in a book (the child would point to the object named on the page in a book)
- Expressive - the child will provide verbal labels
  - body parts
  - common objects in their environment
  - objects in pictures
  - the sounds that they hear

Sort

- sort real objects into categories (food, clothes, silverware, toys)
- sort objects by size (big and little)
- sort by color (focus on 11 primary colors)
- sort by shape (8 basic shapes)
- sort items as real or pretend

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Positional Concepts (ongoing)

- child will imitate positional concepts with body (inside, outside, on, under, over, forward, backward)
- child will manipulate clothing (front, back, top, bottom, left, right)
- child will imitate positional concepts with objects (behind, in front, between, next to, beside, above, below)

Colors/Shapes

- seeing differences in colors
- match colors and shapes to objects in the environment
- Color and Shape Bingo
- Lucky Ducks
- playdough with shape cookie cutters
- teddy bear counters

Recognize Name

- child's name should be written with the first letter capital and the remaining letter in lowercase
- identify name in a group of names (2 or 3 names)
- write their name with magnetic letters
- sign letters to grandparents and other relatives
- find the letters of their names printed in signs and label from the world around them
- display their name in print around the house:
  - table placemats
  - sign on their door
  - write their names on their books

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Figure Ground

- simple inset puzzles
- more difficult interlocking piece puzzles
- tracing cookie cutters on paper (have child match a cookie cutter to the outline of the cookie cutter)
- imitate block building structures
- tracing and following mazes (start out large - sidewalk chalk in the driveway)
- tracing shapes and their name (write in a light color <yellow> and have child trace in a dark color <black>)
- cut a greeting card into three simple pieces and allow child to put it back together (this can also be done with child artwork)

Book Awareness

- Quotes:
  - "Every child is born again in a book." - Henry David Thoreau
  - "The best time to start sharing books with children is during babyhood even when they are as young as six weeks old" - Catherine E. Snow
- songs, rhyming games, language play, and nursery rhymes are all excellent ways to spark children's awareness of language and sound
- young children begin to understand that print is every where in the world around them
- book skills
  - hold the book upright (use the words top, bottom, front/back cover)
  - turn pages individually
  - handle books carefully
  - make your own book (favorite foods, family, etc.)
  - talk about title, author, illustrators

Visual Discrimination
same/different

- find the similarities between objects, colors, shapes, sizes, and letters
- find the differences between objects, colors, shapes, sizes, and letters
- have child identify items in a picture that are silly or misplaced (I Spy books)
- determine item based on descriptors (sock guessing game)

Classification

- classify objects according to function
- classify objects by shape (find all the things that are round)
- classify objects by features (hard/soft, sink/float, rough/smooth, etc.)
- classify objects by letter/sound

Sequencing

- first, last, and middle
- asking what will happen next
- asking what happened before of after
- asking if/then style questions (ex: If you were the mouse in If You Give a Mouse a Cookie, what would you eat?)
- retell a simple story
- use a flannel board to sequence a story

Questions

- ask "Wh" questions to determine understanding of the story
  - Who - Who took the grain to the mill? Little Red Hen
  - What - What did the little red hen bake?
  - Where - Where did the little red hen plant her grain?
  - When - When did the little red hen cut down the wheat?
  - How - How did the hen carry the grain?
  - Why - Why did the little red hen eat the bread by herself?
- ask "Wh" questions to relate the experience to themselves
  - Who - Who would you want to be in the story?
  - What - What would you make?
  - Where - Where can you plant grain?
  - When - When do you take care of your garden?
  - How - How would you carry the grain?
  - Why - Why should people help one another?

Sound Association (ongoing)

- match environmental sounds to object
- match environmental sounds to picture
  - See and Say style toy
- demonstrate print has meaning
  - reading books, labels, signs
  - rhyming poetry, rhyming stories
  - Living Books (on the computer)
  - computer based literacy (Daily's Bookhouse, Reader Rabbit, etc.)
- rhyming games
- sound and letter associations

Letters

- letter identification
  - receptive
  - expressive
  - letter sounds
- words in print
  - find the longest word
  - find the shortest word
  - find a word that starts with the letter ?
  - Count how many times you can find the word ? (hungry - The Very Hungry Caterpillar)

Birth to Three-Year-Old Accomplishments

(Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL)

- Recognizes specific books by cover.
- Pretends to read books.
- Understands that books are handled in particular ways.
- Enters into a book-sharing routine with primary caregivers.
- Vocalization play in crib gives way to enjoyment of rhyming language, nonsense word play etc.
- Labels objects in books.
- Comments on characters in books.
- Looks at picture in book and realizes it is a symbol for a real object.
- Listens to stories.
- Requests/commands adult to read or write.
- May begin attending to specific print, such as letters in names.
- Uses increasingly purposeful scribbling.
- Occasionally seems to distinguish between drawing and writing.
- Produces some letter-like forms and scribbles with some features of English writing.

Three-to Four-Year-Old Accomplishments

Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education
NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL)

- Knows that alphabet letters are a special category of visual graphics that can be individually named.
- Recognizes print in the local environment.
- Knows that it is the print that is read in stories.
- Understands that different text forms are used for different functions of print.
- Pays attention to separable and repeating sounds in language (Peter, Peter, Pumpkin...).
- Uses new vocabulary and grammatical constructions in own speech.
- Understands and follows oral directions.
- Is sensitive to some sequences of events in stories.
- Shows an interest in books and reading.
- When being read a story, connects information and events to real-life experiences.
- Questions and comments demonstrate understanding of literal meaning of story.
- Displays reading and writing attempts, calling attention to self: "Look at my story."
- Can identify 10 alphabet letters, especially those form own name.
- Writes (scribbles)message as part of playful activity.
- May begin to attend to beginning or rhyming sounds in salient words.

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Allana Elovson, Ph.D
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Santa Monica, CA 90402
1993

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Beltsville, MD
1994

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Jean Warren
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1990

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Jean Warren
Totline Publication
Warren Publishing House
1991

APPENDIX J

PHONEMIC AWARENESS INVENTORY RESULTS

APPENDIX J – PHONEMIC AWARENESS INVENTORY RESULTS

Student Number	PPVT-III Initial Score	PPVT-III Final Score	P.A.I. Initial Score Out of 30	P.A.I Final Score Out of 30	Alliteration Initial Score Out of 6	Alliteration Final Score Out of 6
1	92	100	13	16	0	0
2	94	98	20	28	0	4
3	92	107	NA	NA	NA	NA
4	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
5	72	87	8	6	1	6
6	NA	NA	12	13	4	1
7	87	93	9	7	1	0
8	96	101	18	24	3	6
9	91	102	7	11	0	2
10	88	95	12	18	1	1
11	82	104	NA	NA	NA	NA
12	82	93	19	30	3	6
13	53	99	9	19	2	0
14	NA	NA	10	16	0	4
15	NA	NA	12	11	2	4
16	51	95	25	30	5	6
17	72	89	4	14	0	2
18	96	NA	9	30	3	5
19	NA	NA	9	30	2	5
20	63	87	13	13	0	2
21	NA	NA	8	9	4	4
22	NA	NA	17	30	2	6
23	85	98	7	23	2	3
24	73	101	13	22	3	4
25	98	NA	9	23	2	5
26	104	111	16	28	4	5
27	NA	NA	23	30	4	5
28	103	99	9	26	0	4
29	68	92	3	23	1	5
30	90	104	7	26	3	4
31	90	93	8	28	2	4
32	78	98	10	22	5	6
*33	69	87	14	13	NA	2
*34	85	88	0	9	NA	3
*35	NA	95	9	9	NA	3
*36	100	100	6	14	NA	4
*37	96	102	11	12	NA	4
*38	88	96	5	8	NA	NA
*39	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
AVERAGE	**84.1**	**96.9**	**11**	**19.2**	**2**	**3.7**

*Early Childhood Special Education Children

NA=Not Assessed

APPENDIX K

PRE AND POSTTEST RESULTS

APPENDIX K - PRE AND POSTTEST RESULTS

Student Number	Unit 1 Initial Score Out of 10	Unit 1 Final Score Out of 10	Unit 2 Initial Score Out of 15	Unit 2 Final Score Out of 15	Unit 3 Initial Score Out of 15	Unit 3 Final Score Out of 15
1	4	6	8	15	3	6
2	4	9	8	12	10	11
3	2	8	10	11	NA	NA
4	2	9	9	13	10	11
5	2	7	NA	NA	6	13
6	NA	NA	8	10	5	8
7	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
8	3	8	6	9	NA	NA
9	NA	NA	5	10	7	8
10	4	10	8	9	7	12
11	NA	NA	9	11	5	13
12	5	8	7	13	7	14
13	3	9	10	13	NA	NA
14	4	7	7	14	6	9
15	NA	NA	7	11	NA	NA
16	4	9	8	11	9	14
17	3	4	6	11	5	9
18	5	8	8	14	5	13
19	4	NA	9	NA	7	14
20	1	7	4	12	3	11
21	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
22	3	10	7	15	11	NA
23	2	9	6	14	7	13
24	NA	NA	7	15	7	14
25	NA	NA	NA	NA	10	14
26	4	10	8	15	7	NA
27	4	10	9	15	7	15
28	5	10	8	NA	7	NA
29	NA	NA	8	15	10	14
30	5	9	8	15	7	15
31	2	9	8	14	10	15
32	4	8	9	NA	7	14
*33	2	6	6	7	4	10
*34	3	8	5	6	8	10
*35	5	9	6	10	7	10
*36	NA	NA	5	9	7	13
*37	5	7	8	13	8	10
*38	2	4	3	7	8	8
*39	7	7	4	5	6	7
AVERAGE	**3.6**	**8**	**7.2**	**11.7**	**7**	**11.6**

*Early Childhood Special Education Children

NA=Not Assessed

APPENDIX K (continued) - PRE AND POST TEST RESULTS

Student Number	Unit 4 Initial Score Out of 15	Unit 4 Final Score Out of 15	Unit 5 Initial Score Out of 10	Unit 5 Final Score Out of 10	Unit 6 Initial Score Out of 15	Unit 6 Final Score Out of 15	Unit 7 Initial Score Out of 10	Unit 7 Final Score Out of 10
1	5	11	1	5	6	8	1	2
2	7	13	4	10	10	13	8	10
3	NA	NA	NA	NA	9	13	3	5
4	9	13	4	8	NA	NA	6	9
5	NA	NA	NA	NA	4	9	6	NA
6	5	11	2	5	9	9	3	6
7	6	10	4	5	NA	NA	NA	NA
8	6	10	4	6	8	13	NA	NA
9	7	14	NA	NA	10	11	4	6
10	5	12	4	6	10	11	5	7
11	7	14	3	6	7	9	6	6
12	11	13	4	8	9	11	7	10
13	NA	NA	4	7	9	8	5	7
14	6	11	3	7	8	8	3	5
15	5	10	4	6	10	11	6	8
16	9	NA	NA	NA	11	15	7	10
17	4	12	6	7	6	10	4	6
18	6	13	7	10	10	15	6	10
19	8	15	6	10	10	15	7	10
20	5	9	4	10	4	11	1	5
21	NA	NA	2	NA	7	NA	3	6
22	9	13	6	10	9	NA	6	10
23	7	15	5	NA	6	14	NA	NA
24	7	15	6	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
25	9	14	6	8	12	15	7	9
26	10	15	5	9	6	14	6	NA
27	6	15	5	10	9	15	6	10
28	7	14	3	10	10	15	7	10
29	6	13	4	10	NA	NA	NA	NA
30	7	15	5	8	11	15	6	9
31	8	12	6	9	8	15	5	8
32	6	15	5	8	10	15	5	9
*33	6	10	3	4	6	11	2	7
*34	6	13	3	4	7	11	2	6
*35	5	9	2	4	8	11	3	8
*36	6	13	4	7	8	13	1	6
*37	5	11	4	5	7	12	2	7
*38	4	14	2	4	6	10	2	NA
*39	4	5	2	3	4	5	1	NA
AVG.	**6.5**	**12.4**	**4.1**	**7.7**	**8.1**	**11.9**	**4.5**	**7**

*Early Childhood Special Education Children

NA=Not Assessed

APPENDIX L

PARENT SURVEY

As the school year comes to an end, I would like you to fill out this short survey. Thank you for your time and cooperation. Please rate the questions by circling the response that best describes your child, and return by Friday.

I feel that my child has developed an increased interest in books.

Strongly Agree **Agree** **Disagree** **Does Not Apply**

I found the literacy activities and program that were offered to be helpful.

- Building Blocks to Reading Readiness
- Family Literacy Night at the library
- Introduction to Family Literacy
- Mother Goose Make-N-Take

Strongly Agree **Agree** **Disagree** **Does Not Apply**

My child enjoyed listening to the books on tape that were sent home weekly.

Strongly Agree **Agree** **Disagree** **Does Not Apply**

I feel that my child has developed an increased awareness to rhyming.

Strongly Agree **Agree** **Disagree** **Does Not Apply**

I have seen growth in my child's vocabulary.

Strongly Agree **Agree** **Disagree** **Does Not Apply**

The take home bags (classroom characters) were a great family activity. I would recommend it for next year.

Strongly Agree **Agree** **Disagree** **Does Not Apply**

My child recognizes familiar print in his/her environment.
(Cereal boxes, McDonald's, K-Mart)

Strongly Agree **Agree** **Disagree** **Does Not Apply**

APPENDIX M

BOOK REFERENCES

BOOK REFERENCES

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